# Chapter One: Understanding International Relations

## Introduction

International relations, as it is presented in the flow of daily news concern a large number of disparate events; leaders are meeting, negotiations are concluded, wars are started, acts of terror committed, and so on. In order to make sense of all this information we need to know a lot about the contemporary world and its history; we need to understand how all the disparate events hang together. At university, we study these topics, but it is a basic tenet of the academic study of international politics that this rather messy picture can be radically simplified. Instead of focusing on the flow of daily news, we focus on the basic principles underlying it. This is what we will try to do in this module. So, let us begin by thinking big; what is international relations? how was it made? and how did it come to be that way?

## 1.1. Conceptualizing Nationalism, Nations and States

Nationalism is the most influential force in international affairs. It has caused the outbreak of revolutions and wars across the globe. It is noted as a factor for the collapse of age old empires, marker for new borders, a powerful component for the emergence of new states and it is used to reshape and reinforce regimes in history. Nationalism’s triumph is the coming of the nation-state as key actors in world politics-accepted as ultimate, legitimate and the most basic form of political entity. According to Heywood (2014), nationalism is the doctrine that asserts the nation as the basic political unit in organizing society.

In common parlance, the words ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘country’ are used interchangeably and this is not correct. For instance, the word the ‘United Nations’ is a misnomer since in reality it is an association or a society of states-instead of nations. In international politics, it is also common but incorrect to refer the ‘Chinese’, the ‘Americans’ and the ‘Russians’ as ‘nations’. Hence, the question remains: what is a nation? According to Heywood, ‘nations are historical entities that evolve organically out of more similar ethnic communities and they reveal themselves in myths, legends, and songs (2014).

On the other hand, at the end of the eighteenth century this state came to be radically transformed. The ‘state’ was combined with a ‘nation’ forming a compound noun – the ‘nation-state’ – which was organized differently and pursued different goals. A nation, in contrast to a state, constitutes a community of people joined by a shared identity and by common social practices. Communities of various kinds have always existed but they now became, for the first time, a political concern. As a new breed of nationalist leaders came to argue, the nation should take over the state and make use of its institutional structures to further the nation’s ends. In one country after another the nationalists were successful in these aims. The nation added an interior life to the state, we might perhaps say; the nation was a soul added to the body of the early modern state machinery.

The revolutions that took place in Britain’s North American colonies in 1776, and in France in 1789, provided models for other nationalists to follow. ‘We the People of the United States’ – the first words of the Preamble to the US Constitution – was a phrase which itself would have been literally unthinkable in an earlier era. In France, the king was officially the only legitimate political actor and the people as a whole were excluded from politics. In addition, the power of the aristocracy and the church remained strong, above all in the countryside where they were the largest landowners. In the revolution of 1789, the old regime was overthrown and with it the entire social order. The French nation was from now on to be governed by the people, the nation, and in accordance with the principles of liberté, égalité et fraternité– liberty, equality and brotherhood.

The Congress of Vienna of 1815, where a settlement was reached at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, was supposed to have returned Europe to its pre-revolutionary ways. Yet, nationalist sentiments were growing across the continent and they constantly threatened to undermine the settlement. All over Europe national communities demanded to be included into the politics of their respective countries. Nationalism in the first part of the nineteenth century was a liberal sentiment concerning self-determination – the right of a people to determine its own fate. This programme had far-reaching implications for the way politics was organized domestically, but it also had profound ramifications for international politics. Most obviously, the idea of self-determination undermined the political legitimacy of Europe’s empires. If all the different peoples that these empires contained gained the right to determine their own fates, the map of Europe would have to be radically redrawn. In 1848 this prospect seemed to become a reality as nationalist uprisings quickly spread across the continent. Everywhere the people demanded the right to rule themselves.

Although the nationalist revolutions of 1848 were defeated by the political establishment, the sentiments themselves were impossible to control. Across Europe an increasingly prosperous middle-class demanded inclusion in the political system and their demands were increasingly expressed through the language of nationalism. The Finns wanted an independent Finland; the Bulgarians an independent Bulgaria; the Serbs an independent Serbia, and so on. In 1861 Italy too – long divided into separate city-states and dominated by the Church – became a unified country and an independent nation. Yet it was only with the conclusion of the First World War in 1918 that self-determination was acknowledged as a right. After the First World War most people in Europe formed their own nation-states.

As a result of the nationalist revolutions, the European international system became for the first time truly ‘inter-national’. That is, while the Westphalian system concerned relations between states, world affairs in the nineteenth century increasingly came to concern relations between nation-states. In fact, the word ‘international’ itself was coined only in 1783, by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham. In most respects, however, the inter-national system continued to operate in much the same fashion as the Westphalian inter-state system. Nation-states claimed the same right to sovereignty which meant that they were formally equal to each other.

In international politics, nevertheless, the implication of nationalism and its essence is highly questioned. Especially in the contemporary period, nation states are put under pressure and their role in world politics is significantly challenged. However, there is also an emerging narrative which advances the idea that a revival of nationalism is happening across the world with the post-cold war assertions of religion, culture and ethnicity as potent forces in world politics – hence we have S.P. Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ as an alternative to Francis Fukuyama’s ‘End of History’ thesis on world politics.

## 1.2. Understanding International Relations

International relations is not merely a field of study at university but is an integral aspect of our (increasingly international) everyday lives. We now live in a world where it is impossible to isolate our experiences and transactions from an international dimension. If an Ethiopian student watches the sitcom Friends or the soap opera Neighbors, they are both learning about and participating in a culture different from their own. If a student flies from Addis to Washington DC or London they are subject to international air space agreements and contributing to global warming. If a student chooses to buy a fair-trade coffee, they are making a conscious decision about contributing to a state and a people’s development. Should you work for an inter-national company or international organization, or even if you work for a locally based company there will inevitably be an international dimension to the functioning of the company as it negotiates the myriad of regional laws, international trade laws, international employment laws and tax laws. The limits to how international relations will continue to impact your life is tremendous.

Studying international relations enables students and professionals to better comprehend the information we receive daily from newspapers, television and radio. People not only live in villages and towns, but form part of the wider networks that constitute regions, nations and states. As members of this world community, people have to be equally aware of both their rights and their responsibilities – and should be capable of engaging in important debates concerning the major issues facing the modern international community. One crucial feature of the world in which we live is its interconnectedness – geographically, intellectually and socially – and thus we need to understand it.

Originally, the study of international relations (a term first used by Jeremy Bentham in 1798) was seen largely as a branch of the study of law, philosophy or history. However, following the carnage of the First World War there emerged an academic undertaking to understand how the fear of war was now equal only to the fear of defeat that had preceded the First World War. Subsequently, the first university chair of international relations was founded at the University of Wales in 1919. Given such diverse origins, there is no one accepted way of defining or understanding international relations, and throughout the world many have established individual ways of understanding international relations. Any attempt to define a field of study is bound to be somewhat arbitrary and this is particularly true when one comes to international relations.

Today, international relations could be used to describe a range of interactions between people, groups, firms, associations, parties, nations or states or between these and (non) governmental international organizations. These interactions usually take place between entities that exist in different parts of the world – in different territories, nations or states. To the layperson interactions such as going on holiday abroad, sending international mail, or buying or selling goods abroad may seem personal and private, and of no particular international concern. Other interactions such as choosing an Olympics host or awarding a film Oscar are very public, but may appear to be lacking any significant international political agenda. However, any such activities could have direct or indirect implications for political relations between groups, states or inter-national organizations. More obviously, events such as international conflict, inter-national conferences on global warming and international crime play a fundamental part in the study of international relations. If our lives can be so profoundly influenced by such events, and the responses of states and people are so essential to international affairs, then it is incumbent on us to increase our understanding of such events.

Participation in international relations or politics is also inescapable. No individual, people, nation or state can exist in splendid isolation or be master of its own fate; but none, no matter how powerful in military, diplomatic or economic circles, even a giant superpower, can compel everyone to do its bidding. None can maintain or enhance their rate of social or economic progress or keep people alive without the contributions of foreigners or foreign states. Every people, nation or state is a minority in a world that is anarchic, that is, there is an absence of a common sovereign over them. There is politics among entities that have no ruler and in the absence of any ruler. That world is pluralistic and diverse. Each state is a minority among humankind. No matter how large or small, every state or nation in the world must take account of ‘foreigners’.

On the other hand, there are legal, political and social differences between domestic and international politics. Domestic law is generally obeyed, and if not, the police and courts enforce sanctions. International law rests on competing legal systems, and there is no common enforcement. Domestically a government has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. In international politics no one has a monopoly of force, and therefore international politics has often been interpreted as the realm of self-help. It is also accepted that some states are stronger than others. Domestic and international politics also differ in their underlying sense of community – in international politics, divided peoples do not share the same loyalties – people disagree about what seems just and legitimate; order and justice. It is not necessary to suggest that people engaged in political activity never agree or that open and flagrant disagreement is necessary before an issue becomes political: what is important is that it should be recognized that conflict or disagreement lies at the heart of politics. To be political the disagreement has to be about public issues.

Nonetheless, recent experience has taught us that matters that were once purely domestic and of no great relevance internationally can feature very prominently on the international political agenda. Outbreaks of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and avian flu exemplify how domestic incidents can become international and can lead to foreign policy changes and commitments. International relations, therefore, is too important to be ignored but also too complex to be understood at a glance. Individuals can be the victim or victors of events but studying international relations helps each one of us to understand events and perhaps to make a difference. This, however, requires competence as well as compassion. Some come to study international relations because of an interest in world events, but gradually they come to recognize that to understand their own state or region, to understand particular events and issues they have to move beyond a journalistic notion of current events. There is a need to analyze current events, to examine the why, where, what and when, but also to understand the factors that led to a particular outcome and the nature of the consequences. Studying international relations provides the necessary tools to analyze events, and to gain a deeper comprehension of some of the problems that policy-makers confront and to understand the reasoning behind their actions.

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| **Box 1.1: Key concepts**   * Participation in international relations is inescapable * Distinction between domestic and international politics real but declining * Philosophical debates on human nature: Hobbesian vs Lockean (realist vs liberal) |

Scholars and practitioners in international relations use concepts and theories to make their study more manageable. This, however, was complicated due to the emergence of major philosophical disputes about the fundamental nature of international relations: the Hobbesian versus the Lockean state of nature in the seventeenth century; and the Realist versus Idealist debate of the first part of the twentieth century. Hobbes, writing in 1651, interpreted the state of society to be: ‘continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’. The concepts articulated by Hobbes still reverberate in many modern fundamental assumptions about the nature of the system and of human beings.

Whereas, Locke took a more optimistic view and suggested that sociability was the strongest bond between men –men were equal, sociable and free; but they were not licentious because they were governed by the laws of nature. He was clear that nature did not arm man against man, and that some degree of society was possible even in the state preceding government. Three and a half centuries later the differing perceptions and assumptions concerning human nature that influenced Hobbes and Locke are still able to divide approaches to the study of the nature of international relations.

International politics is pre-eminently concerned with the art of achieving group ends against the opposition of other groups. But this is limited by the will and ability of other groups to impose their demands. International politics involves the delicate adjustment of power to power. If physical force were to be used to resolve every disagreement there would result an intolerable existence for the world’s population. Society would not prosper and every human being would be suspicious of every other human. Sometimes this happens on the international stage, given that every state is judge and jury of its own interests and can decide for itself whether to use force – with the 2003 invasion of Iraq by a US coalition of the willing as a prime example. In order to resolve these disagreements it is necessary that states and international organizations can come up with a way of resolving differences. Although such ideals have been difficult to establish across the board it has become the case that there are non-violent options available to states.

International politics is also about maintaining international order. But that order has to be maintained in an anarchical world. The arena of international relations and politics seems to be continually expanding. To appreciate this, one needs to reflect on the multiplication of independent states. In 1800 there were no international organizations, but now there is one for almost every activity– both governmental and non-governmental. When the United Nations Charter was signed in October 1945, 51 states signed it. In the first decade of twenty-first century the UN grew between 189 and 192 member states. There has also been the continuing growth of governmental and international services. There are now increased organizational demands in terms of meeting the ordinary everyday needs of citizens. Interdependence implies that people, businesses and organizations rely on each other (and their rivals) in different places for ideas, goods and services. International relations and politics are necessary for all states, but political power is not centralized and unequal. That is why power, coercion and bargaining still hold sway.

## 1.3. The Nature and Evolution of International Relations

The rise of the sovereign state in medieval Europe consisted of a complicated pattern of overlapping jurisdictions and loyalties. Most of life was local and most political power was local too. At the local level there was an enormous diversity of political entities: feudal lords who ruled their respective estates much as they saw fit, cities made up of independent merchants, states ruled by clerics and smaller political entities such as principalities and duchies. In medieval Europe there were two institutions with pretensions to power over the continent as a whole – the (Catholic) Church and the Empire. The Church was the spiritual authority, with its centre in Rome. Apart from a small Jewish minority, all Europeans were Christian and the influence of the Church spread far and penetrated deeply into people’s lives. As the custodian, from Roman times, of institutions like the legal system and the Latin language, the Church occupied a crucial role in the cultural and intellectual life of the Middle Ages.

The Empire – known as the Holy Roman Empire – was established in the tenth century in central, predominantly German-speaking, Europe. It also included parts of Italy, France and today’s Netherlands and Belgium. It too derived legitimacy from the Roman Empire, but had none of its political power. The Holy Roman Empire is best compared to a loosely structured federation of many hundreds of separate political units. The political system of medieval Europe was thus a curious combination of the local and the universal. Yet, from the fourteenth century onward this system was greatly simplified as the state emerged as a political entity located at an intermediate level between the local and the universal. The new states simultaneously set themselves in opposition to popes and emperors on the universal level, and to feudal lords, peasants and assorted other rulers on the local level. This is how the state came to make itself independent and self-governing. The process started in Italy where northern city-states such as Florence, Venice, Ravenna and Milan began playing the pope against the emperor, eventually making themselves independent of both. Meanwhile, in Germany, the pope struggled with the emperor over the issue of who of the two should have the right to appoint bishops. While the two were fighting it out, the constituent members of the Holy Roman Empire took the opportunity to assert their independence. This was also when the kings of France and England began acting more independently, defying the pope’s orders.

Between 1309 and 1377, the French even forced the pope to move to Avignon, in southern France. In England, meanwhile, the king repealed the pope’s right to levy taxes on the people. With the Reformation in the sixteenth century the notion of a unified Europe broke down completely as the Church began to split apart. Before long the followers of Martin Luther, 1483–1546, and John Calvin, 1509–1564, had formed their own religious denominations which did not take orders from Rome. Instead the new churches aligned themselves with the new states. Or rather, various kings, such as Henry VIII in England or Gustav Vasa in Sweden, took advantage of the religious strife in order to further their own political agendas. By supporting the Reformation, they could free themselves from the power of Rome. All over northern Europe, the new ‘Protestant’ churches became state-run and church lands became property of the state.

In this climate, the increasingly self-assertive states were not only picking fights with universal institutions but also with local ones. In order to establish themselves securely in their new positions of power, the kings rejected the traditional claims of all local authorities. This led to extended wars in next to all European countries. Peasants rose up in protest against taxes and the burdens imposed by repeated wars. There were massive peasant revolts in Germany in the 1520s with hundreds of thousands of participants and almost as many victims. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, there were major peasant uprisings in Sweden, Croatia, England and Switzerland. In France, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the nobility rose up in defence of its traditional rights and in rebellion against the encroachments of the king.

From the sixteenth century onwards the states established the rudiments of an administrative system and raised armies, both in order to fight their own peasants and in order to defend themselves against other states. Since such state-building was expensive, the search for money became a constant concern. The early modern state was more than anything an institutional machinery designed to develop and extract resources from society. In return for their taxes, the state provided ordinary people with defense and a rudimentary system of justice. If they refused to pay up, state officials had various unpleasant ways to make them suffer.

The European states emerged in the midst of struggle and strife, and struggle and strife have continued to characterize their existence. Yet, in early modern Europe it was no longer the competing claims of local and universal authorities that had to be combated but instead the competing claims of other states. The Thirty Years’ War, 1618–1648, was the bloodiest and most protracted military confrontation of the era. As a result of the war, Germany’s population was reduced by around a third. What the Swiss or the Scottish mercenaries did not steal, the Swedish troops destroyed. Many of the people who did not die on the battlefield died of the plague. The Thirty Years’ War is often called a religious conflict since Catholic states confronted Protestants.

Yet, Protestant and Catholic countries sometimes fought on the same side and religious dogma was clearly not the first thing on the minds of the combatants. Instead the war concerned which state should have hegemony (or dominance) over Europe. That is, which state, if any, would take over from the universal institutions of the Middle Ages. The main protagonists were two Catholic states, France and Austria, but Sweden – a Protestant country – intervened on France’s side and in the end no dominant power emerged. The Treaty of Westphalia, 1648, which concluded the 30 years of warfare, has come to symbolize the new way of organizing international politics.

From this point onwards, international politics was a matter of relations between states and no other political units. All states were sovereign, meaning that they laid claims to the exclusive right to rule their own territories and to act, in relation to other states, as they themselves saw fit. All states were formally equal and they had the same rights and obligations. Taken together, the states interacted with each other in a system in which there was no overarching power. Sovereignty and formal equality led to the problem of anarchy.

Once these states had made themselves independent both of the pope and the emperor, they soon discovered that their relations had become vastly more complicated. In order to avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary conflicts, the different rulers began dispatching ambassadors to each other’s courts. This diplomatic network provided a means of gathering information, of spying, but also a way of keeping in touch with one another, of carrying out negotiations and concluding deals. The practices of diplomacy soon expanded to include a number of mutually advantageous provisions: the embassies were given extraterritorial rights and legal immunity, diplomatic dispatches were regarded as inviolable and ambassadors had the right to worship the god of their choice. These originally north Italian practices gradually expanded to embrace more states and by the middle of the seventeenth century the system included France, Spain, Austria, England, Russia, Poland, Denmark, Sweden and the Ottoman Empire. Diplomatic practices were never powerful enough to prevent war, indeed wars continued to be common, but they did provide Europeans with a sense of a common identity. A European state was, more than anything, a state that participated in the system of shared diplomatic practices.

On the other hand, most of what happened in Europe before the nineteenth century was of great concern to the Europeans but of only marginal relevance to people elsewhere. Europe certainly had a significant impact on the Americas, North and South. However, it had far less impact on Asia and relations with Africa were largely restricted to a few trading ports. The large, rich and powerful empires of East Asia were organized quite differently than the European states, and international politics followed different principles. The same can be said for other parts of the world such as the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world. And yet, it was the European model of statehood and the European way of organizing international relations that eventually came to organize all of world politics.

It was only in the nineteenth century that relations between Europe and the rest of the world were irrevocably transformed. The reason is above all to be found in economic changes taking place in Europe itself. At the end of the eighteenth century, new ways of manufacturing goods were invented which made use of machines powered by steam, and later by electricity, which made it possible to engage in large-scale factory production. As a result of this so called ‘industrial revolution’, the Europeans could produce many more things and do it far more efficiently. As cheap, mass-produced goods flooded European markets, the Europeans began looking for new markets overseas.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, other European countries joined in this scramble for colonies, not least in Africa. Colonial possessions became a symbol of ‘great power’ status, and the new European nation-states often proved themselves to be very aggressive colonizers. France added West Africa and Indochina to its growing empire, and the Germans and Italians also joined the race once their respective countries were unified. This explains how, by the time of the First World War in 1914, most parts of the world were in European hands. There were some exceptions to this rule – China, Japan, Siam, Persia, Ethiopia and Nepal, among others – but even in these ostensibly independent countries the Europeans had a strong presence.

But this was not how the European state and the European way of organizing international relations came to spread to the rest of the world, at least not directly. After all, a colonized country is the very opposite of a sovereign state; the colonized peoples had no nation-states and enjoyed no self-determination. It was instead through the process of liberating themselves from the colonizers that the European models were copied. Since the Europeans only would grant sovereignty to states that were similar to their own, the only way to become independent was to become independent on European terms. To create such Europe-like states was thus the project in which all non-European political leaders engaged.

Once they finally made themselves independent in the decades after the Second World War, as an international climate of decolonization took hold, all new states had a familiar form. They had their respective territories and fortified borders; their own capitals, armies, foreign ministries, flags, national anthems and all the other paraphernalia of European statehood. Whether there were alternative, non-European, ways of organizing a state and its foreign relations was never discussed. Whether it made sense for the newly independent states to try to live up to European ideals was never discussed either. This, briefly, is how the modern world was made.

## 1.4. Actors in International Relations

### 1.4.1. State Actors

International Relations (IR) traditionally focused on interactions between states. However, this conventional view has been broadened over the years to include relationships between all sorts of political entities (‘polities’), including international organizations, multinational corporations, societies and citizens. IR captures a vast array of themes ranging from the growing interconnectedness of people to old and new forms of security, dialogue and conflict between visions, beliefs and ideologies, the environment, space, the global economy, poverty and climate change. The sheer number of actors and issues that are relevant to IR can be overwhelming. This can make it seem like a daunting task to not just study various aspects of IR but to try to grasp the bigger picture.

There are a lot of states in the world – in fact, according to the latest count there are no fewer than 195 of them. States are obviously very different from each other, but they are also similar to each other in important respects. All states are located somewhere, they have a territorial extension; they are surrounded by borders which tell us where one state ends and another begins. In fact, with the exception of Antarctica, there is virtually no piece of land anywhere on earth’s surface that is not claimed by one state or another and there is no piece of land that belongs to more than one state (although, admittedly, the ownership of some pieces of land is disputed).

Moreover, all states have their own capitals, armies, foreign ministries, flags and national anthems. All states call themselves ‘sovereign’, meaning that they claim the exclusive right to govern their respective territories in their own fashion. But states are also sovereign in relation to each other: they act in relation to other states, declaring war, concluding a peace, negotiating a treaty, and many other things. In fact, we often talk about states as though they were persons with interests to defend and plans to carry out. According to a time-honoured metaphor, we can talk about international politics as a ‘world stage’ on which the states are the leading actors.

Considered in relation to the primacy of the state, international politics come to be defined in terms of interactions between states in an international system of states where these are ‘sovereign’ entities, territorially bound, and independent ultimately of any external authority. The ‘international’ is hence structurally differentiated from the ‘domestic’ in that where the former, according to this ‘realist’ perspective, is defined as ‘anarchical’, the latter is hierarchical. State sovereignty comes to be the defining element in the study of international relations, even where other perspectives challenge the primacy of the state.

### 1.4.2. Non-State Actors

Our every day lived experience is influenced by global firms, international governmental institutions, and non-governmental organizations that necessitates the remit of our investigations in order to account for the diversity of actors and forms of inter-actions which take place in global politics. Considered in terms of the dynamics of change and how we provide explanations of change, the question begins to shift attention back to an earlier problematic, namely the capacity to make a difference. When thought of in terms of ‘capacity’, the ‘agency’ of states is as much as that of the UN or Amnesty International, for each acts within a wider whole, whether this is conceived in terms of the international political economy or the international legal order, or indeed the anarchical international system (Giddens, 1984).

Similarly, multinational corporations (MNCs) – often with headquarters in one state and operational capability in a range of others – contribute significantly to international relations. Additionally there are other trans-governmental organizations where the relations between players are not controlled by the central foreign policy of the state – such as the exchange rate of a state’s currency being determined by the money markets.

However, despite all the challenges and many new theories of international politics/relations the state remains, for many, the primary actor in international politics. These ideas and debates demonstrate that although the term ‘international relations’ has for centuries inferred a particular concern with relations between nations, it does not have to remain so confined. Thus, contrary to the narrow traditionalist realist view of international relations and foreign policy/relations, which focuses on the physical security and protection of the territory of the state and its people, one needs to look wider.

Furthermore, are the relations between states governed by mutual cooperation and interdependence or are they best conceived as conflictual and subject to the imperatives of a self-help system based on survival in an anarchical system? How these questions are answered depends on assumptions made in relation to the elements (agents, structures) conferred primacy, how we acquire knowledge about these, and the arguments we present in justifying our claims to knowledge. Much controversy in the discipline of international relations relates to these assumptions and how they impact on explaining and understanding global politics and phenomena such as war, identity and affiliation, the workings of the international political economy, the causes of inequality and poverty, the potentials for regulating behavior in relation to climate change, and so on.

What is significant in this context is that, the traditional conception of the state as the main framework of political interaction and the main point of reference for both society and the individuals within it has lost a lot of its meaning and importance. If we look at the world around us, state borders do not seem to accurately delimitate global affairs. The majority of global interactions – be they related to global finance, production, education, personal and professional travel, labor migration or terrorism – no longer occur via state channels the way they once did. We could say that the increased focus on non-state actors and cross-border issues has marked a close-to-revolutionary turn in IR; something that could be interpreted as a shift away from the inter-national (‘between-states’) to the ‘trans-national’ (‘across/beyond-states’ and their borders). Robert Keohane, one of the leading scholars in the field, recently stated that ‘International Relations’ is no longer a suitable label and that we should instead refer to the discipline as ‘Global Studies’ or ‘World Politics’ (Keohane 2016). In today’s world, few societal and political issues, challenges and problems are neatly confined by the borders of individual states or even groups of states. Thinking about world affairs in ‘trans-national’ rather than in purely ‘inter-national’ terms therefore seems more of an analytical necessity than just a choice.

Individuals and groups interact across borders and thus relativize the meaning of space and territory as conventional IR knew it. International commercial aviation and the rapid spread of information technologies has further increased people’s mobility and the rate at which interactions occur across and beyond state borders. The ability for common people to store, transfer and distribute large amounts of information, the possibility for data to travel across the world in virtually no time, and the increasing availability of high-speed internet have not only changed lives at personal and community levels but also dramatically altered the general dynamics in politics and global affairs.

Social media provide accessible platforms of communication that allow for the projection and promotion of ideas across borders at virtually no cost to the individual or group generating and advocating them. Various political agendas – be they progressive, revolutionary or outright dangerous – can unfold in a relatively uncontrolled and unregulated way, posing real challenges to governmental agencies and the political leaders that try to improve and direct them. Random individuals can potentially start a revolution from their homes, bypassing any conventional conceptions of power and transcending spatial and material boundaries to the point where political activity and even confrontation become weightless and immaterial altogether IR and you.

## 1.5. Levels of Analysis in International Relations

In the early days of IR – say, from 1919 until after the Second World War – a lot of what could be called traditional or conventional IR was not concerned with any potential distinctions between different levels of analysis or theoretical perspectives. J. David Singer (1961: 78) lamented that scholars would simply roam up and down the ladder of organizational complexity with remarkable abandon, focusing upon the total system, international organizations, regions, coalitions, extra-national associations, nations, domestic pressure groups, social classes, elites, and individuals as the needs of the moment required. Singer’s criticism of this ‘general sluggishness’ (Singer 1961: 78) highlights another value in thinking of IR as something that can be studied from different and distinctive perspectives. Being clear about our level of analysis can prevent us from indulging in analytical ‘cherry-picking’, that is to say, from randomly gathering evidence across different levels in pursuit of an answer to our research questions.

We also need to acknowledge the analytical consequences of drifting between levels: that our search for evidence will need to be comprehensive and that we might have to look at a different set of data or material for each additional aspect. For example, if you were to explain Germany’s decision to open its borders to hundreds of thousands of refugees in 2015 you might want to look at the external pressures as much as the personal motivations of German chancellor Angela Merkel. You would investigate factors at the system level (such as economic indicators, refugee flows, the attitude of key partners) and at the individual level (such as Merkel’s ideological background, her interests and perceptions of the problem as it emerges from statements and key decisions throughout her career). Each would contribute to an overall explanation, but you would need to be prepared to look at different sets of information.

From the 1950s onwards, more and more IR scholars endeavored to specify the focus of their analysis more clearly. The most prominent example was Kenneth Waltz’s Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis (1959) which introduced an analytical framework for the study of IR that distinguished between what he referred to as different ‘images’ of an issue: the individual, the state and the international system. Waltz’s contributions to the discipline generated interest in analyzing the international system as a place of interactions between states.

## 1.5.1. The individual level

International relations can be analyzed from the perspective of individuals. Here we would look at the behaviors, motivations, beliefs and orientation of the individual in affecting a particular international phenomenon. If looking at the actions of individuals, we would likely also need to engage with the implications of human nature. This can be seen in the psychology and emotions behind people’s actions and decisions, their fears and their visions as well as their access to information and capacity to make a difference. Psychological factors do not only matter at the level of individual members of society or of a group. They are also an important factor in the analysis of foreign policy, whenever particular mindsets and perceptions of political leaders and key actors might influence their decisions and behavior. For example, a Prime Minister, encountering the leader of another state to negotiate an important financial agreement, the head of a large corporation adopting a policy to rescue their business or even the situation of individual citizens and their attitude towards austerity measures?

Focusing on the individual level and, say, particular actions of specific personalities in the public realm–be they politicians, diplomats or bankers – would lead us to drawing different conclusions again about the causes and consequences that phenomenon. In short, being aware and acknowledging the potential gaps in our observation – that is to say, all of what is not directly captured by our perspective or level of analysis – is important. Applying rigor in our analysis is also important. Scholarly writings are nevertheless not always explicit about their particular perspective or level of analysis. So, as a reader, it is important to stay critical and to look closely and enquire whenever an argument presented to us appears to straddle potentially conflicting analytical lenses.

## 1.5.2. The group level

A group level analysis would try and break the analysis down into certain kinds of groups, how they relate to the state level and where they position themselves with respect to the global dimension of the issues they are dealing with. An example of this can be seen in the work of Engelen et al. (2012), who discuss the global financial crisis as the ‘misrule of experts’, pointing at the politicized role of technocratic circles and the relative lack of democratic control over the boards of large banks and corporations. A group-level analysis focusing on foreign policy would look, for example, at the role of lobbying groups and the way they influence national decision-making on an issue. In this sense, a group-level analysis would be more interested in the actions of groups of individuals, such as all voters of a country and the way they express their views in the general election, political parties picking up on the issue in their campaigns or social movements forming to counter the effects of the crisis on society. A group-level analysis could be interested in activist/pressure groups like ‘Anonymous’ that seek to influence the global debate about the winners and losers of globalization and capitalism, and so forth.

## 1.5.3. The state level

Although this idea of the global or system level as a context of anarchy features in many contributions to the IR literature, the main focus remains on the state as the dominant unit of analysis. This enduring focus on the state, and therefore, on the state level of analysis, is referred to as the relative ‘state-centrism’ of the discipline. This means that IR scholars would generally not only regard states as the central unit of analysis as such, they also conceive of the state as a point of reference for other types of actors. From this perspective, the state acts as the arena in which state officials, politicians and decision-makers operate. The state is seen as the framework that encapsulates society and as the main point of reference for the individual.

This predominant focus on the state is strongly related to an assumption IR scholars have made about the state also being the main location of power within the international sphere. This idea that the state is where power is primarily concentrated and located has to be seen against the historical context within which some of the most prominent IR scholars operated – the Cold War. It was an era in which much of international affairs appeared to be run via state channels and in line with particular state interests.

Although the Cold War has long since passed, a lot of today’s political life remains managed in the state framework, based on issues like national security, domestic cohesion or internal stability. States form the primary kind of actor in major international organizations such as the United Nations, they feature prominently in the global discourse on most of the major challenges of our time, and states still hold what famous German sociologist Max Weber called the monopoly on violence – the exclusive right to the legitimate use of physical force. States continue to matter and thus have to be part of our considerations about what happens in the world and why. The state as a unit of analysis and frame of reference will certainly not go away any time soon, nor will the interactions of states as a key level of analysis in IR.

A state level analysis might be interested to look at any one of the following: it can consider states as actors in their own right as if they were clearly defined entities that have certain preferences, and accordingly, look at their actions and decisions to find an answer to our analytical questions; it may look at how states interact with each other to deal with the crisis – in other words, their foreign policy; how they build off each other’s suggestions and react to international developments and trends; how they cooperate, say, in the framework of international organizations; or how we look at them as competitors and antagonists, each of them pushing for a stronger position in what makes up the world economy.

A state-level study would also require careful consideration of what kinds of states we are looking at (how they are ordered politically), their geographical position, their historical ties and experiences and their economic standing. It would likely also look at the foreign policy of states, meaning their approach to and practice of interacting with other states. Key indicators of the foreign policy of states would be the policies proposed and decided by governments, statements of top-level politicians but also the role and behavior of diplomats and their adjoining bureaucratic structures.

## 1.5.4. The system level

The system level perspective would like to conceive the global system as the structure or context within which states cooperate, compete and confront each other over issues of national interest. You might visualize it as a level above the state. Particularly important in that context is the distribution of power amongst states, meaning, whether there is one main concentration of power (unipolarity), two (bipolarity) or several (multipolarity). In this perspective, global circumstances are seen to condition the ability and opportunity of individual states and groups of states to pursue their interests in cooperative or competitive ways. The view of states being embedded in a global context traditionally comes with the assumption that our international system is ‘anarchic’. An anarchic system is one that lacks a central government (or international sovereign) that regulates and controls what happens to states in their dealings with each other.

The international system can be conceived of as made up of states, groups of states, organizations, societies or individuals within and across those societies. IR generally distinguishes between three levels of analysis: the system, the state, and the individual – but the group level is also important to consider as a fourth. To be able to use the level of analysis as an analytical device, we need to be clear about what we are most interested in. If we were to study and understand the 2008 global financial crisis and its consequences, for example, there would be various ways of approaching, discussing and presenting the issue. To determine the level of analysis we would need to determine what those levels are and ask ourselves some questions, which we can explore below.

A system-level study would need to consider global linkages that go beyond single interactions between states. It would need to look at such things as the balance of power between states and how that determines what happens in global politics. This could include developments that are even outside the immediate control of any particular state or group of states, such as the global economy, transnational terrorism or the internet. A global level would give us the big picture and help us to grasp wide ranging dynamics that emerge from the global economic ‘system’ to affect its various components, states, national economies, societies, and individuals.

## 1.6. The Structure of International System

International Relations scholars maintain that political power is usually distributed into three main types of systems namely: (i) uni-polar system, (ii) bipolar system and, (iii) multipolar system. These three different systems reflect the number of powerful states competing for power and their hierarchical relationship. In a uni-polar international system, there is one state with the greatest political, economic, cultural and military power and hence the ability to totally control other states. On the other hand, in both bipolar and multipolar systems there is no one single state with a preponderant power and hence ability to control other states.

As a result, the states in such systems are forced to balance each other’s power. In the case of the bipolar system, for instance, there are two dominant states (super powers) and the less powerful states join either sides through alliance and counter alliance formations. The problem with bipolar system is that it is vulnerable for zero-sum game politics because when one superpower gains the other would inevitably lose. One typical historical example where the world was under bipolar system is the cold war period. Multipolar system is the most common throughout history. During the period around World War I it was a typical world system. It usually reflects various equally powerful states competing for power. It is not necessary for states to change their relationship with zero-sum game. In such system, it is possible to bring change without gaining or losing power.

**Power**

Power is the currency of international politics. As money is for economics, power is for international relations (politics). In the international system, power determines the relative influence of actors and it shapes the structure of the international system. That is also why it is often said that international relations is essentially about actors’ power relations in the supra-national domain. For instance, Hans Morgenthau, a famous thinker of realism theory in IR, argues that International politics, like all other politics, is a struggle for power. It thus follows from this that power is the blood line of international relations.

Power can be defined in terms of both relations and material (capability) aspects. The relational definition of power is formulated by Robert Dahl. Dahl’s definition understands power as ‘A’s’ ability to get ‘B’ to do something it would not otherwise do. To better understand this definition, consider this historical example: The United States and Soviet Union had roughly balanced capabilities during the cold war era. Even though they can mutually destruct each other, the two world powers were in a stalemate for the whole of the cold war period. Why? Because wherever capabilities are equal, power tends to vanish totally. However, a small rise in the capabilities of one of the two nations could translate into a major advantage in terms of power balance. With the demise of the Soviet Union, for instance, the power balance between Russia and the United States has changed in favour of the latter, i.e. the United States emerged as more powerful than Russia and in consequence managed to exercise power over Russia- meaning the USA owned the ability to get Russia to do what Russia would not otherwise do.

A**narchy**

Anarchyis a situation where there is absence ofauthority (government)be it in national or international/global level systems. Within a country ‘anarchy’ refers to a breakdown of law and order, but in relations between states it refers to a system where power is decentralized and there are no shared institutions with the right to enforce common rules. An anarchical world is a world where everyone looks after themselves and no one looks after the system as a whole. Instead, states had to rely on their own resources or to form alliances through which the power of one alliance of states could be balanced against the power of another alliance. Yet, as soon became clear, such power balances were precarious, easily subverted, and given the value attached to territorial acquisitions, states had an incentive to engage in aggressive wars. As a result, the new international system was characterized by constant tensions and threats of war – which often enough turned into actual cases of warfare.

**Sovereignty**

Sovereignty is another basic concept in international relations and it can be defined as an expression of: (i) a state’s ultimate authority within its territorial entity (internal sovereignty) and, (ii) the state’s involvement in the international community (external sovereignty). In short, sovereignty denotes double claim of states from the international system, i.e., autonomy in foreign policy and independence/freedom in its domestic affairs.

# 1.7. Theories of International Relations

The politics of global interactions is more accessible now in the present age than it ever has been in the past. Whether it is conflict in the Middle East, the break-up of Yugoslavia, human rights violations or poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, we are daily confronted by images of global interactions which in some way cross-national boundaries, involve a variety of factors, and impact upon a widespread number of issues which may or may not affect our own lives, values and welfare. What is beyond dispute is that we, as individuals, may no longer claim immunity or distance from events which occur elsewhere, which affect others beyond our shores. Relationships which take place across state boundaries seem, therefore, to include interactions involving not only the diplomatic core or representatives of our individual states, but the business community, the media, charitable organizations and so on.

Theories of international relations allow us to understand and try to make sense of the world around us through various lenses, each of which represents a different theoretical perspective. In order to consider the field as a whole for beginners it is necessary to simplify International Relations theory. This section introduces the traditional theories, middle-ground theories and critical theories of international relations. Examples are used throughout to help bring meaning and perspective to these positions

## 1.7.1. Idealism/Liberalism

Liberalism in IR was referred to as a ‘utopian’ theory and is still recognized as such to some degree today. Its proponents view human beings as innately good and believe peace and harmony between nations is not only achievable, but desirable. Immanuel Kant developed the idea in the late eighteenth century that states that shared liberal values should have no reason for going to war against one another. In Kant’s eyes, the more liberal states there were in the world, the more peaceful it would become, since liberal states are ruled by their citizens and citizens are rarely disposed to desire war. This is in contrast to the rule of kings and other non-elected rulers who frequently have selfish desires out of step with citizens. His ideas have resonated and continue to be developed by modern liberals, most notably in the democratic peace theory, which posits that democracies do not go to war with each other, for the very reasons Kant outlined.

Further, liberals have faith in the idea that the permanent cessation of war is an attainable goal. Taking liberal ideas into practice, US President Woodrow Wilson addressed his famous ‘Fourteen Points’ to the US Congress in January 1918 during the final year of the First World War. As he presented his ideas for a rebuilt world beyond the war, the last of his points was to create a general association of nations, which became the League of Nations. Dating back to 1920, the League of Nations was created largely for the purpose of overseeing affairs between states and implementing, as well as maintaining, international peace.

In the early years, from 1919 to the 1930s, the discipline was dominated by what is conventionally referred to as liberal internationalism. The primary concern of this approach was that conditions which had led to the outbreak of the First World War and the devastation which followed should not be allowed to occur in the future. The driving force was therefore normative in orientation and the underlying assumption was that the academic study of international relations had the potential to contribute to the prevention of war and the establishment of peace. With foundations in the Enlightenment and the eighteenth century, liberal internationalism, as Scott Burchill points out, suggested that ‘the prospects for the elimination of war lay with a preference for democracy over aristocracy, free trade over autarky, and collective security over the balance of power system’ (Burchill, 1996: 31).

The two interrelated ideas that emerge from Kant’s reflections on a perpetual peace and which formed the basic foundations for the liberal internationalism that dominated the discipline of international relations in its early days centered on democratic governance and institutionalized law-governed relations of cooperation between states. The two formative pillars of liberal internationalism, democracy and free trade, required the establishment of international relations which would promote collectivist aspirations in place of the conflictual relations which formed the basis of balance-of-power thinking. For it was just such thinking, based as it was on the premise that relations between states are determined solely by the pursuit of power, which led to violations of international law and ultimately to the outbreak of war in 1914. A system of ‘collective security’ was advocated to replace antagonistic alliance systems with an international order based on the rule of law and collective responsibility. The domestic analogy of a social contract was deemed to be transferable for the international level.

The creation of the League of Nations after the end of the First World War was the culmination of the liberal ideal of international relations. The League would function as the guarantor of international order and would be the organ through which states could settle their differences through arbitration. Any deviance from international law would be dealt with collectively in the name of a commonly held interest in the maintenance of peace and security. However, when the League collapsed due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, its failure became difficult for liberals to comprehend, as events seemed to contradict their theories. Therefore, despite the efforts of prominent liberal scholars and politicians such as Kant and Wilson, liberalism failed to retain a strong hold and a new theory emerged to explain the continuing presence of war.

Liberals also argue that international law offers a mechanism by which cooperation among states is made possible. International law refers to the body of customary and conventional rules which are binding on civilized states in their intercourse with each other. Notwithstanding this, however, states are the subjects of international law in the sense that they are in principle obliged to implement the decisions of international tribunals or courts. Essentially, international law provides the normative framework for political discourse among members of the international system. The framework does not guarantee consensus, but it does foster the discourse and participation needed to provide conceptual clarity in developing legal obligations and gaining their acceptance.

In playing this role, international law performs two different functions. One is to provide mechanisms for cross-border interactions, and the other is to shape the values and goals these interactions are pursuing. The first set of functions are called the ‘‘operating system’’ of international law, and the second set of functions are the ‘‘normative system.” In short, the purpose of international law is thus to regulate the conducts of governments and the behaviors of individuals within states. For instance, in the case of human rights law we have one area called International human rights law which provides a normative system for regulating states’ behavior in their treatment of human rights within or outside their jurisdiction. Today, we have more than 190 states/ governments, international institutions created by states, and elements of the private sector – multinational corporations and financial institutions, networks of individuals, and NGOs participating in the international legal processes.

However, the legal standing of international law is a contentious issue among scholars. There are three competing views on this matter. Some scholars say international law is not a law at all but a branch of international morality. Others say it is a law in all senses of the term. Yet, others say it is a matter of definition. As a result, the operating system of international law functions in some ways as a constitution does in a domestic legal system and not as law proper-i.e it does nothing beyond setting out the consensus of its constituent actors on distribution of authority, rights and responsibilities for governance within the international system.

## 1.7.2. Realism

Though liberal internationalist ideals are now recognized for their significant contribution in the development of normative approaches to the subject, they seemed, at the outset of the 1930s and ultimately the outbreak of the Second World War, futile and utopian. Thus it was that the subject matter of international relations, dominated as it had been by international law and diplomatic history, was transformed to an intellectual agenda which placed power and self-interest at the forefront of concern. The ‘idealism’ of the interwar period was henceforth to be replaced by realism, and it is this school of thought which, in its various articulations, remains dominant in the discipline. E.H. Carr’s ‘Twenty Years’ Crisis’, published in 1939, was the text which positioned what he called utopianism in opposition to realism.

Carr called for a ‘science’ of international relations, one which would move away from what he saw as the wishful thinking of liberal internationalism. By presenting the fact–value distinction, that which separates the ‘what is’ from the ‘what ought to be’, in dichotomous or oppositional terms, Carr’s text called for a move away from utopian doctrine which, he suggested, was based on an unrealistic negation of power and its impact on international politics.

Realists argue that values are context bound, that morality is determined by interest, and that the conditions of the present are determined by historical processes. Where idealism sought a universally applicable doctrine, Carr’s call is for a historical analysis of the contingent frameworks which determine politics. The formative assumptions of realism as a school of thought centre on the view that the international system is ‘anarchic’, in the sense that it is devoid of an all-encompassing authority. Where domestic society is ruled by a single system of government, the international system of states lacks such a basis and renders inter-national law non-binding and ultimately ineffectual in the regulation of relations between states. Conflict is hence an inevitable and continual feature of inter-national relations. As liberal internationalism sought foundations in the Enlightenment and the birth of reason so realism locates its roots further back, citing Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes as its founding voices. Thucydides and his account of the Peloponnesian War is read as the formative paradigmatic text in that it covers themes such as power, intrigue, conquest, alliance-building and the intricacies of bargaining. Here we see portrayed a system of city states, the units or members of which are self-reliant and independent, with war breaking out in 431 BC.

Hans Morgenthau, whose Politics among Nations(1948) leads the realist perspective, points to a clear line of descent from Thucydides when he asserts that ‘realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all’. Morgenthau’s text starts with the assumption that there are objective laws which have universal applicability, ‘international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power’. Where liberal internationalism had been openly normative and prescriptive in orientation, the realism expressed by Morgenthau purports to be scientific and explanatory. Theories of international relations must, according to Morgenthau, be consistent with the facts and it is these which must be the ultimate test of the validity of theoretical statements. Morgenthau, like other realists, hence assumes a clear separation of fact and value, of theory and practice.

By the late 1950s and into the 1960s we see a discipline dominated by realist conceptions of international relations, based as these were on the state as the primary unit of analysis, on interactions between states governed by the relentless pursuit of power, and on a substantive empirical agenda defined by Cold War concerns. Realism gained momentum during the Second World War when it appeared to offer a convincing account for how and why the worst conflict in known history originated after a period of supposed peace and optimism. Although it originated in named form in the twentieth century, many realists have traced its origins in earlier writings. Indeed, realists have looked as far back as to the ancient world where they detected similar patterns of human behavior as those evident in our modern world. As its name suggests, advocates of realism purport it reflects the ‘reality’ of the world and more effectively accounts for change in international politics.

Thomas Hobbes is often mentioned in discussions of realism due to his description of the brutality of life during the English Civil War of 1642–1651. Hobbes described human beings as living in an order-less ‘state of nature’ that he perceived as a war of all against all. To remedy this, he proposed that a ‘social contract’ was required between a ruler and the people of a state to maintain relative order. Hedley Bull was one of the prominent scholars that criticized Morganthau’s approaches. His concern was that relations between states could not be reduced to measurable attributes of power or models of decision-making. If features of ‘society’ characterized relations between states and if, indeed, we could locate codes of conduct which formed such a society, we could legitimately look to history and philosophy to conceptualize the complexity of international politics. Bull’s, ‘The Anarchical Society’, first published in 1977, came to represent what subsequently has been referred to as the ‘English School’, demarcated from the United States-dominated realist and scientific perspective mainly through its normative approach to the subject (Bull, 1977).

Kenneth Waltz’s ‘Man, the State and War’ (1959) and his later ‘Theory of International Politics’ (1979) define a neo-realist agenda and absolutely dominated the discipline and some would argue do so to the present day. Where Morgenthau’s realism concentrates on the attributes and behavior of states within the international system, Waltz focuses on the international system itself and seeks to provide a structuralist account of its dynamics and the constraints it imposes on state behavior. The international system is, for Waltz, anarchical and hence perpetually threatening and conflictual. What is of interest to Waltz is not the set of motives which may determine state behavior, but the imperatives of the international system and the distribution of capabilities within it. This is hence a structural account, but it is an account that markedly differs in approach and substantive content from the neo-Marxist structuralism outlined below. It has much akin to realism and must therefore be placed within that perspective.

Today, we take such ideas for granted as it is usually clear who rules our states. Each leader or ‘sovereign’ (a monarch, or a parliament for example) sets the rules and establishes a system of punishments for those who break them. We accept this in our respective states so that our lives can function with a sense of security and order. It may not be ideal, but it is better than a state of nature. As no such contract exists internationally and there is no sovereign in charge of the world, disorder and fear rules international relations. That is why war seems more common than peace to realists indeed they see war as inevitable. When they examine history they see a world that may change in shape, but is always characterized by a system of what they call ‘international anarchy’ as the world has no sovereign to give it order.

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| **Key Concepts:**   * Liberalism depicts optimism by arguing that human beings are good, cooperation is possible and conflict can be resolved peacefully * Realism depicts pessimism by arguing that human beings are bad, conflict is inevitable and war is the most prominent instrument of resolving conflict * Structuralism/Marxism focused on the structure of dependency and exploitation caused by the international division of labor * Constructivism/Critical Theories challenge the foundations of the dominant perspectives and argue for the marginalized and the voiceless |

One central area that sets realism and liberalism apart is how they view human nature. Realists do not typically believe that human beings are inherently good, or have the potential for good, as liberals do. Instead, they claim individuals act in their own self-interests. For realists, people are selfish and behave according to their own needs without necessarily taking into account the needs of others. Realists believe conflict is unavoidable and perpetual and so war is common and inherent to humankind. Hans Morgenthau, a prominent realist, is known for his famous statement ‘all politics is a struggle for power’ (Morgenthau 1948). This demonstrates the typical realist view that politics is primarily about domination as opposed to cooperation between states. Here, it is useful to briefly recall the idea of theories being lenses.

Realists and liberals look at the very same world. But when viewing that world through the realist lens, the world appears to be one of domination. The realist lens magnifies instances of war and conflict and then uses those to paint a certain picture of the world. Liberals, when looking at the same world, adjust their lenses to blur out areas of domination and instead bring areas of cooperation into focus. Then, they can paint a slightly different picture of the same world. It is important to understand that there is no single liberal or realist theory. Scholars in the two groups rarely fully agree with each other, even those who share the same approach. Each scholar has a particular interpretation of the world, which includes ideas of peace, war and the role of the state in relation to individuals. And, both realism and liberalism have been updated to more modern versions (neoliberalism and neorealism) that represent a shift in emphasis from their traditional roots

Liberals share an optimistic view of IR, believing that world order can be improved, with peace and progress gradually replacing war. They may not agree on the details, but this optimistic view generally unites them. Conversely, realists tend to dismiss optimism as a form of misplaced idealism and instead they arrive at a more pessimistic view. This is due to their focus on the centrality of the state and its need for security and survival in an anarchical system where it can only truly rely on itself. As a result, realists reach an array of accounts that describe IR as a system where war and conflict is common and periods of peace are merely times when states are preparing for future conflict.

Another point to keep in mind is that each of the overarching approaches in IR possesses a different perspective on the nature of the state. Both liberalism and realism consider the state to be the dominant actor in IR, although liberalism does add a role for non-state actors such as international organizations. Nevertheless, within both theories states themselves are typically regarded as possessing ultimate power. This includes the capacity to enforce decisions, such as declaring war on another nation, or conversely treaties that may bind states to certain agreements. In terms of liberalism, its proponents argue that organizations are valuable in assisting states in formulating decisions and helping to formalize cooperation that leads to peaceful outcomes. Realists on the other hand believe states partake in international organizations only when it is in their self-interest to do so. Many scholars have begun to reject these traditional theories over the past several decades because of their obsession with the state and the status quo.

## 1.7.3. Structuralism/Marxism

Marxism is an ideology that argues that a capitalist society is divided into two contradictory classes – the business class (the bourgeoisie) and the working class (the proletariat). The proletariats are at the mercy of the bourgeoisie who control their wages and therefore their standard of living. Marx hoped for an eventual end to the class society and overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat. It was during the 1960s, however, that other perspectives came to constitute alternative modes of conceptualizing international politics. With decolonization, the US withdrawal from Vietnam and the rise of a Third World alliance which made itself felt primarily at the United Nations, global relations came to encompass matters which seemed far removed from the Cold War rhetoric which underpinned relations between East and West. Economic and financial relations, development, social issues and regional integration seemed to challenge the primacy of the state as sole unit of analysis and power as the ultimate determinant of relations between states. One of the foremost challengers to the orthodoxy was John Burton, whose work came to be pivotal in the pluralist attempt to rewrite the discipline (Burton, 1968 and 1972). Central to Burton’s corpus was the view that global relations were multiform in content and involved a number of different types of actor, from individuals to states, to non-state organizations.

This third perspective or paradigm which emerged as a critique of both realism and pluralism concentrated on the inequalities that exist within the international system, inequalities of wealth between the rich ‘North’ or the ‘First World’ and the poor ‘South’ or the ‘Third World’. Inspired by the writings of Marx and Lenin, scholars within what came to be known as the structuralist paradigm focused on dependency, exploitation and the international division of labor which relegated the vast majority of the global population to the extremes of poverty, often with the complicities of elite groups within these societies. As many in this tradition argued, most states were not free. Instead they were subjugated by the political, ideological and social consequences of economic forces. Imperialism generated by the vigor of free enterprise capitalism in the West and by state capitalism in the socialist bloc imposed unequal exchange of every kind upon the Third World (Banks, 1984).

The basis of such manifest inequality was the capitalist structure of the international system which accrued benefits to some while causing, through unequal exchange relations, the impoverishment of the vast majority of others. The class system that pre-dominated internally within capitalist societies had its parallel globally, producing centre–periphery relations that permeated every aspect of international social, economic and political life. Thus, where pluralism and its liberal associations had viewed networks of economic interdependence as a basis of increasing international cooperation founded on trade and financial interactions, neo-Marxist structuralism viewed these processes as the basis of inequality, the debt burden, violence and instability.

Major writers in the structuralist perspective emerged from Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, primary among which were Andre Gunter Frank and Samir Amin, both of whom concentrated on dependency theory. Immanuel Wallerstein’s world systems analysis provided a historicist account of the spread of capitalism from the sixteenth century to the present, providing a definitive statement on the impact of this structure on interstate, class and other social relations (Amin, 1989; Frank, 1971; Wallerstein, 1974, 1980, 1989).

## 1.7.4. Constructivism

Constructivism is another theory commonly viewed as a middle ground, but this time between mainstream theories and the critical theories that we will explore later. Unlike scholars from other perspectives, constructivists highlight the importance of values and shared interests between individuals who interact on the global stage. Alexander Wendt, a prominent constructivist, described the relationship between agents (individuals) and structures (such as the state) as one in which structures not only constrain agents but also construct their identities and interests. His famous phrase ‘anarchy is what states make of it’ (Wendt 1992) sums this up well. Another way to explain this, and to explain the core of constructivism, is that the essence of international relations exists in the interactions between people. After all, states do not interact; it is agents of those states, such as politicians and diplomats, who interact. As those interacting on the world stage have accepted international anarchy as the defining principle, it has become part of our reality. However, if anarchy is what we make of it, then different states can perceive anarchy differently and the qualities of anarchy can even change over time. International anarchy could even be replaced with a different system if a critical mass of other individuals (and by proxy the states they represent) accepted the idea. To understand constructivism is to understand that ideas, or ‘norms’ as they are often called, have power. IR is, then, a never-ending journey of change chronicling the accumulation of the accepted norms of the past and the emerging norms of the future. As such, constructivists seek to study this process.

## 1.7.5. Critical Theories

Critical approaches refer to a wide spectrum of theories that have been established in response to mainstream approaches in the field, mainly liberalism and realism. In a nutshell, critical theorists share one particular trait – they oppose commonly held assumptions in the field of IR that have been central since its establishment. Thus, altered circumstances call for new approaches that are better suited to understand, as well as question, the world we find ourselves in. Critical theories are valuable because they identify positions that have typically been ignored or overlooked within IR. They also provide a voice to individuals who have frequently been marginalized, particularly women and those from the Global South.

Critical theorists who take a Marxist angle often argue that the internationalization of the state as the standard operating principle of international relations has led ordinary people around the globe becoming divided and alienated, instead of recognizing what they all have in common as a global proletariat. For this to change, the legitimacy of the state must be questioned and ultimately dissolved. In that sense, emancipation from the state in some form is often part of the wider critical agenda.

Post-colonialism differs from Marxism by focusing on the inequality between nations or regions, as opposed to classes. The effects of colonialism are still felt in many regions of the world today as local populations continue to deal with the challenges created and left behind by the former colonial powers. Post-colonialism’s origins can be traced to the Cold War period when much activity in international relations centered around decolonization and the ambition to undo the legacies of European imperialism. This approach acknowledges that politics is not limited to one area or region and that it is vital to include the voices of individuals from other parts of the world. Edward Said (1978) developed the prominent ‘Orientalist’ critique, describing how the Middle East and Asia were inaccurately depicted in the West. As a result, more focus within the discipline was placed on including the viewpoints of those from the Global South to ensure that Western scholars no longer spoke on their behalf. This created a deeper understanding of the political and social challenges faced by people living within these regions as well as an acknowledgement of how their issues could be better addressed. Postcolonial scholars are, therefore, important contributors to the field as they widen the focus of enquiry beyond IR’s traditionally ‘Western’ mindset.

Generally, realists believe that international organizations appear to be successful when they are working in the interests of powerful states. But, if that condition is reversed and an organization becomes an obstacle to national interests, then the equation may change. This line of enquiry is often used by realists to help explain why the League of Nations was unsuccessful – failing to allow for Germany and Japan’s expansionist desires in the 1930s. A contemporary example would be the United States invading Iraq in 2003 despite the Security Council declining to authorize it. The United States simply ignored the United Nations and went ahead, despite opposition. On the other hand, liberals would argue that without the United Nations, international relations would likely be even more chaotic – devoid of a respectable institution to oversee relations between states and hold bad behavior to account. A constructivist would look at the very same example and say that while it is true that the United States ignored the United Nations and invaded Iraq, by doing so it violated the standard practices of international relations. The United States disregarded a ‘norm’ and even though there was no direct punishment, its behavior was irregular and so would not be without consequence. Examining the difficulties the United States faced in its international relations following 2003 gives considerable weight to the constructivist and liberal viewpoints.

In contrast to liberals and constructivists, who value the United Nations to an extent, critical theories offer different perspectives. Marxists would argue that any international body, including the United Nations, works to promote the interests of the business class. After all, the United Nations is composed of (and was built by) states who are the chief protagonists in global capitalism – the very thing that Marxism is opposed to. Likewise, the United Nations can be said to be dominated by imperial (or neo-imperial) powers. Imperialism, according to Marxist doctrine, is the highest stage of capitalism. The United Nations, then, is not an organization that offers any hope of real emancipation for citizens. Even though it may appear humanitarian, these actions are merely band-aids over a system of perpetual state-led exploitation that the United Nations legitimizes.

Finally, post-colonialists would argue that the discourse perpetuated by the United Nations is one based on cultural, national or religious privilege. They would suggest, for instance, that, as it has no African or Latin American permanent members, the Security Council fails to represent the current state of the world. Post-colonialists would also point to the presence of former colonial powers on the Security Council and how their ability to veto proposals put forward by other countries perpetuates a form of continued indirect colonial exploitation of the Global South.

# Chapter Two: Understanding Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

# Introduction

Foreign policy of a state is the actions, decisions and goals that states pursue towards the outside world. It is shaped by both external/systemic factors and internal factors. International regimes, international organizations, the prevalence of great powers at international level are some of systemic factors that impinges on the foreign policy of a state. Internally, the economic, technological and military capabilities of states heavily affect foreign policy. On top of these, the idiosyncrasy of leaders contributes much in affecting the foreign policy making and implementation of a country. In this manner, it is important to understand the deriving motives behind foreign policy, viz., the pursuit of national interest. States adopt foreign policy to achieve and promote their national interests often defined as the short term, medium term and long term goals. To this end, states establish diplomatic relations and contacts and use different tactics to protect, often to maximize, their national interest. In this chapter attempt has been made to examine the debates on national interest and foreign policy, patterns and instruments of foreign policy, and finally an overview of Ethiopia’s foreign policy.

## 2.1. Defining National Interest

National interest is the raison de`tat, (the reason of state), to justify its actions and policy towards other states at international level. National interest refers to set of values, orientation, goals and objectives a given country would like to achieve in its international relations. It has been the main driving force that determines the contents of foreign policy. However, there are controversies on the exact meaning, scope and contents of national interests. So, this section is devoted to examining the meaning and debates of national interest. It also discusses realist and idealist interpretations of national interest.

A. K. Holsti, a prolific writer on the topic, defines national interest as “an image of the future state of affairs and future set of conditions that governments through individual policy makers aspire to bring about by wielding influence abroad and by changing or sustaining the behaviors of other states” (139). This implies that national interest is something related to the ambition of governments, viz., what governments aspire to full fill in its future interaction with others. Holisti also underlined on the means that states employ to realize their future ambitions. Power or the ability to influence the behaviors of other states is underscored as the primary instrument to implement national interest.

Another scholar that provided normative and descriptive definitions of national interest is Seabury. In the normative sense, national interest is related to “…set of purposes which a nation…should seek to realize in the conduct of its foreign relations”. In the descriptive sense as well, national interest may be regarded, “as those purposes which the nation [states] through its leadership appears to pursue persistently over time” (Seabry cited in Holisti). However, there is a major division of opinion in the field of international relations regarding whether national interest can be defined objectively or whether it is a subjective enterprise, viz., an art. This debate on whether national interest is a science or and art can be traced as far back to Plato’s philosophy.

For Plato, the good of the polis (that is the public good) could best be arrived at by philosopher king aided by a few highly learned, detached and fair-minded advisors. These individuals could make wise and well informed decisions regarding the common good without accounting for the yearnings of lesser-minds or accommodating selfish and sectarian pressures. The basic assumptions of this thought include: (1) that wise and well informed decisions can be made by a few carefully selected individuals who have been expressly trained to think in terms of the collective good of the state; (2) that these few individuals, who possess awesome and unchecked power, will not be corrupted by this power; and (3) that once socially optimal decisions have been made, they can be implemented effectively by loyal, well trained, and obedient bureaucracies. More often, Plato’s ideas have been used as the inspiration for dictatorial forms of government. Dictatorial or Authoritarian governments assume that they should emphasize substance and wisdom of policies rather than procedural issues such as public debate, consultation, participation and criticism. Defenders of such regimes believe that one person with strength, wisdom, knowledge, and, above all, power can make good decisions than participatory decision making (Columbis & Wolfe1981:74)

To further complicate the problem of identifying national interest, foreign policy decision is not necessarily a clear-cut and rational process. Policies are often generated through great internal political and bureaucratic debates. Multiple conflicting criteria compete for priority in the minds of the decision maker as they shape the contents of national interest. Scholars in the field point out that often official statement made for purpose of propaganda and public consumption cloud the picture and prevent the analyst from identifying the real motives of state action. Colmbis has provided a multiplicity of criteria used in defining national interest, including “operational philosophy, moral and legal criteria, pragmatic criteria, ideological criteria, professional advancement, partisan criteria, bureaucratic-interest criteria, ethnic/racial criteria, class-status criteria and foreign –dependency criteria” (1984: 82-87).

**Operational Philosophy**

Depending on time, location, your orientation toward the world around you, and in particular the action of your predecessors, you may choose one of two major style of operation. First, act in a bold and sweeping fashion. Up on taking office, introduce major new practices, policies, and institutions and discontinue others. This style is often referred to as *synoptic* in the decision making literature. The decision maker with synoptic orientation assumes that he/she has enough information about an important issue to develop a major policy with some confidence that its consequence can be predicted or controlled. The second major style of operation is to act in caution, probing, and experimental fashion, following the trial and error approach. This style is called incremental in the decision making literature. The decision maker in an incremental orientation assumes that political and economic problems are too complex to proceed with bold initiative without worrying about their consequence. Thus the incrementalist usually seeks to perfect existing legislations, policies, institutions and practices.

**Ideological Criteria:**

Most of the time, governments employ ideological criteria and establish their relations on the basis of that criteria. They may identify their friends or enemies countries using the litmus test of ideology. During cold war, the ideology of communism and capitalism had been often used to establish cooperation or conflict with countries. Hence, national interest may be shaped by underlying ideological orientations of the regime in power.

**Moral and Legal Criteria:**

On the other hand, sometimes states are expected to act morally as this is equated with acting honestly and making your public decision accordingly. Thus moral behavior, in international politics involves keeping your promise –treaties, living and letting others live (the poor and the disadvantaged), avoiding exploitation and uneven development between the developing countries and the developed ones; and generally standing up for the principles to which you are morally committed and that are widely accepted in your culture. Acting legally means, abiding by the rules of international law to the extent that such rules are identified and accepted. If there are lacunas, areas where no international regimes have been developed, then you act in a general sprit of equity and justice.

**Pragmatic Criteria:**

As pragmatist, your orientation is low key, matter of fact, not on emotions and professions. You look at issues and events around you and the world with sense of prudence and with sort of rationality. On the basis of the scientific analysis of cost and benefit or merit and demerit to your country interest, you may act. Here, your decisions are made without considering normative issues, issues that involves judgment, be it bad or good. So the practical utility of merit of your action will be counted other than morality and personal sentiments.

**Professional Advancement Criteria:**

In this case, your action may be manipulated and adjusted in consideration of your professional survival and growth, in short your personal success. Quite often, in large bureaucracies that lack good governance the trick to success is to “play the game” and “not to rock the boat.” This attitude has been referred to cynically as the “go along to get along” effect. So, bureaucratic behavior is conformist behavior that is marked strong resistance to new policies and thinking. Even leaders might choose conformity to either to popular pressure or to strong elites whose support they consider indispensable for their political survival.

**Partisan Criteria:**

Here you tend to equate the survival and the success of your political party, or ethnic or religious origin with the survival and success of your country. In similar fashion, you may use bureaucratic criteria to prioritize the policy issues. You may tend to equate the interest of your organization (the army, the foreign office, and so forth) with the national interest. Given limited budgetary resources, battles among different offices for more budget allocation might be waged.

**Foreign Dependency Criteria:**

These criteria usually applies to less developing countries, who had fallen under the yoke of colonialism, and now, even after political independence, kept the colonial ties with their ex-masters intact. These countries are still dependent on their ex-colonial states for technical aid, expertise and technology, sometimes even for their security. Governments in these countries are therefore heavily dependent on the support of the outside powers, sometimes, for their survival. As a result of this state of dependency, the less developing countries face difficulties to defend and promote their national interest. Looking at these conflicting criteria, one can conclude that national interest is not a purely scientific endeavor that results in optimal advantage for states. On the contrary, determination of national interest appears to be a product of conflicting wills ambitions, motivations, needs, and demands.

However, realist international scholars reject the ideological, legal and moral criteria to define and shape the contents of national interest. Realist scholars, particularly, Hans Morgenthau advised leaders to prioritize pragmatic criteria when defining national interest and employing foreign policy. Morgenthau defines national interest in terms of pursuits of power. And power is about establishing control or influencing the behaviors of others, either diplomatically or use of coercion. In anarchical international system, power for him is a means for achieving and promoting the interest of state. International politics is a struggle among states and thus the prime interest of state is survival and security among other things. So, national interest in the competitive and anarchical international environment should be objectively defined in terms of ensuring survival and security of a state, than talking about justice and morality. Morgenthau emphatically argues that pragmatism and practical necessity should be the guiding principle, than any legal, ideological or moral criteria, of foreign policy of state.

Morgenthau also warns leaders of states to be cautious enough in calculating the range and scope of their countries national interest. The scope of national interest and their foreign policy should be proportional to their capabilities. So, prudence should be the virtue of leaders, if there is virtue and morality; otherwise miscalculations and moral and ideological visions might lead to chaos and destruction. A good diplomat according to Morgenthau is a rational diplomat and a rational diplomat is a prudent diplomat. Prudence is the ability to assess one’s needs and aspirations while carefully balancing them against the needs and aspirations of others.

On the other hand, idealists have strong belief in the relevance of legal, ideological and moral elements which realists fail to recognize as the constituting elements of national interest. They don’t see legal and moral factors apart from the so called “reality”. According to this view, specific actions and objective of foreign policy have often been derived from general moral and legal guidelines and principles. Even such policies as the formation of alliance, declaration of war, covert foreign intervention, humanitarian intervention, foreign aid and others have always been justified on moral and legal grounds. So, national interest reflects the marriage of different criteria that include legal and moral criteria, ideological criteria and prudence or pragmatism-practical necessities on the ground.

Realists, however, fail to recognize and prescribe solutions for addressing global problems because of the exclusive emphasis given to state and national interest. Idealists believe on the prevalence of common problems of human beings as, environmental pollution, ecological imbalance, depletion of resource, population growth, poverty, war, arms race, uneven development and the north-south gap…etc. Cognizant of such cross-cutting issues, idealists call for global solutions than local (national) solutions. The establishment of new institutions with global orientation may play vital role in addressing global problems, instead of the state-centric particularism. States could no longer be viable actors in addressing cross-cutting problems by themselves.

## 2.2. Understanding Foreign Policy and Foreign Policy Behaviors

Foreign policy refers to the sets of objectives and instruments that a state adopts to guide its relation with the outside world. The objectives of foreign policy which a state wants to achieve are in one way or another related to national interest. So, national interest is often considered as the objectives of foreign policy of a state. And these objectives can be classified as long range, middle range and short range. The scope and content of foreign policy of a state is often determined by the capabilities of the concerned state. As the capabilities of states vary across the board, the foreign policy orientation, percepts, visions as well as the instruments varies as well. Despite this, however, one can still identify certain patterns of foreign policy behavior. So, this section is devoted to examine the meaning and foreign policy objectives of a state. It touches up on the three dimensions of foreign policy patterns such as scope, alignment and methods of operation at skin-depth level.

### 2. 2.1. Defining Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is something that a state would like to achieve in its external relations with others. It involves the general purposes and specific strategies a state employs to achieve or promote its national interest. According to Rochester, foreign policy refers to “the set of priorities and percepts established by national leaders to serve as guidelines for choosing among various courses of action in specific situations in international affairs” (p111). The foreign policy thus involves general purposes, priority of goals to be realized and achieved. It also encompasses specific strategies and instruments, economic and diplomatic tools that states employ to achieve their objectives.

These objectives, visions and goals state aspire to achieve is commonly referred as national interest. All states would like to promote their national interest as their capability or power allows them to do. Morgenthau suggests that the minimum goal a state would like to achieve is survival. Every state should protect their physical, political, and cultural identities against any encroachment by other states. Translated into more specific objectives, the preservation of physical identity is equated with the maintenance of the territorial integrity of a state. Preservation of political identity is equated with the preservation of existing politico-economic systems. And the preservation of cultural identity is equated with ethnic, religious, and linguistic and historical norms of the peoples residing in the state (Columbis: 78).

Foreign policy also involves specific instruments and tactics that must be employed to realize those objectives and goals. The most widely employed instruments include, diplomatic bargaining, economic instruments, propaganda, terrorism (sabotage), and use of force (war). Each instrument is used to affect the behaviors of other states, and has an element of power. In diplomacy, states attempt to affect the behavior of others through bargaining that involves less element of power as compared to other instruments. Yet states may manipulate carrot and stick methods such as reward or threats so as to induce agreement whenever there appears to be incompatible goals and objectives.

Security and survival of a state, as explained above, has always been considered as the first priority, among various foreign policy objectives, which a state aspires to achieve in the short run. In this regard, K. J. Holisti (138-160) categorizes the foreign policy objectives of states into three, namely the short range, middle ranges and long range objectives. Let us, then, take up the foreign policy objectives in the following section.

### 2.2.2. Foreign Policy Objectives

Foreign policy, just like any policy, sets short term, middle term and long term goals and objectives to be achieved in proportion to a state’s capability. Such classifications of foreign policy objectives is based on the combination of the three criteria:(1) the value placed on the objective; (2) the time element placed on its achievement; and (3) the kind of demands the objective imposes on other states in international system. Based on these criteria, the objectives can be classified as: (1) core values and interests, to which states commit their very existence and that must be preserved or extended at all time; (2) middle range goals, which normally impose demands on several others states (commitments to their achievement are serious and time limit is also attached to them); and (3) universal long range goals-which seldom have definite time limits. In practice leaders rarely place the highest value on long range goals and it’s very much dependent on the capability and ideology of the state.

#### Core Interests and Values (Short Range Objectives)

Core values and interests can be described as those kinds of goals for which most people are willing to make ultimate sacrifices. They are usually stated in the form of basic principles of foreign policy and become article of faith that society accepts without any questioning it. So core interests are sacrosanct by entire peoples residing in the state. Core interests and values are most frequently related to the self-preservation of political and economic systems, the people and its culture, and the territorial integrity of a state. These are short-range objectives because others goals cannot be realized if the existence of the state and its political units are not ensured.

The exact definition of core value or interest in any given country depends on the attitudes of those who make foreign policy. Some governments place great values on controlling or defending neighboring territories, because these area contain asset such as man power and resources that can increase the capabilities, or because they believe that the major threat for their territorial integrity might materialize through adjacent countries and then conquering the part or whole of neighboring countries might be considered as the core interests of states. These have been the underlying reason behind colonialism-a belief that direct acquisition of foreign soil and people will help to bolster the capability and economic needs-national interest- of the colonial power.

Still to day countries such as Israel and the United States pursue such policies called extra-territoriality. Extraterritoriality is there when the national interest and claims of a country is projected beyond the limit of its geographic boundary. Israel, although, did not publicly state that it had a major objective of expanding its territories at the expense of Arab states, its military actions, wars with Arab countries, had demonstrated its intentions. Israel has always considered those areas and territories it had conquered through its successive military success as strategically favorable frontiers to be a core value related to national survival.

States may think that their national interest is at risk when the interests and security of citizens, or kin ethnic or religious groups living in the neighboring states and other states are threatened. So, liberating or protecting the interests of such individuals and groups might be considered as part of its core national interest. Nevertheless, the most essential objective of any foreign policy, core interests and values, is to ensure the sovereignty and independence of the home territory and to perpetuate a particular political, social, and economic systems based on that territory

#### Middle Range Objectives

Unlike, the short range objective, the middle range objectives drastically varies across states. The variation is obviously due to the difference in the level of economic and technological progress, as well as the military capability, the middle range objectives of states. Yet it can be said that the bottom point that a state would like to achieve in its medium term is to take a course of actions that have the highest impact on the domestic economic and welfare needs and expectation. This would include the attempts of government to meet economic-betterment demands and needs through international action. Social welfare and economic development, ca not be achieved through self-help, as most states have only limited resources, administrative services, and technical skills. Interdependence means that to satisfy domestic needs and aspirations, states would have to interact with others. Trade, foreign aid, access to communication facilities, sources of supply, and foreign market are for most states necessary for increasing social welfare.

It can be argued that with the very great demands people have placed on governments to provide them jobs, income, recreation, medical services, and general security, government increasingly have to develop policies to satisfy expectations of face political defeat. In these circumstances, it may be difficult to gain much public support for other type of objectives, such as glory, territorial expansion, or power for its own sake. Hence, the primary commitment of governments must be to pursue those course of action that have the highest impact on domestic economic and welfare needs of its people.

#### Long- Range Objectives

Long range goals are those plans, dreams, and visions concerning the ultimate political or ideological organization of the international system, and rules governing relations in that system. The difference between middle-range and long range goals relates not only to different time elements inherent in them; there is also a significant difference in scope. In pressing for middle range goals , states make particular demands against particular interest; in pursuing long range goals, states normally make universal demands, for their purpose is no less than to reconstruct an entire international system according to a universally applicable plan or vision.

Here it must be noted that such long range visions and dreams may have international repercussions as far as they are complemented by the capabilities and powers; otherwise the long range visions will not have any international significance beyond paper consumption and rhetoric level. This, however, doesn’t necessarily imply that states that are less capable, often those middle powers and less developing countries, does not formulate long range objective. Every country has its own visions and ambition proportional to its relative strength and capabilities to be realized in the long run.

### 2.2.3. Foreign Policy Behavior: Patterns and Trends

Foreign policy behavior refers to the actions states take towards each other. It is important to note that these actions usually are not as ends in themselves, but are tied in some way with larger purposes, from long range objectives to short term objectives that leaders hope to achieve in their dealings with other countries. The nature of foreign policy is such that one can expect to find double standards and inconsistencies in the records of all countries. It is not easy to label countries as simply peace loving or war-like or to use other such categorizations. Nevertheless, patterns of foreign policy behavior can be identified. Arnold Wolfers, a famous specialist in the field of International Relations, suggested that all foreign policy behavior ultimately boils down to three possible patterns: (1) self-preservation (maintaining the status quo); (2) self-extension (revising the status quo in one’s own favor); self-abnegation (revising the status quo in some else’s favor).

Seen from the above perspective, the foreign policy patterns of countries such as United States can be categorized as self-preservation. United States, following second world emerged as one of the strongest actor, super power in international relations. One can say, with no doubt, that the international institutions (IMF, World Bank, GATT/WTO) that were established following Second World War have been strongly shaped by United States. The underlying philosophy of such institutions, and even the decision making procedures are all shaped to serve the global interests the country. Even the United Nations has been serving the interest of United State as the country has key position in the Security Council as one of Veto power among the few. Cognizance of all the advantages that accrue from the existing international system and international economic order, U.S has become the staunch supporter of the international order. Any attempt to reform the international system and the politico-economic order will face strong criticisms, if not threat or use force, and sanctions. These days U.S has become the sole defender of the international system and the liberal economic-political order after the collapse of USSR and decline of communist ideology. On the other hand newly emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil, Germany and others are competing to restructure the international institutions and different regimes so as to create enabling environment to promote their national interest. Such policy trend can be equated with Wolfers’ model of self-extension.

The third model, i.e. self-abnegation reflects the foreign policy trends that are being displayed in Less Developing Countries (LDC). This can be seen in the weak states of the world which fail to defend and promote their national interests in their external relations. States that are weak and very much dependent on foreign aid are profoundly caught with many problems in order to pursue an autonomous policy. Such countries may succumb to such challenges and compromise its long lasting national interest for temporary and immediate benefits.

### 2.2.4. Foreign Policy Dimensions

The analysis of foreign policy behavior can also be done along a number of specific dimensions, keeping in mind that behavior can change over time and with different style of leaderships and circumstances. These dimensions include alignment, scope and modus operandi. A brief discussion of specific foreign policy behaviors in light of these dimensions would be illustrative.

#### Alignment

One can first speak of alignment tendencies, in particular whether national leaders choose to ally with certain countries or to remain neutral. The focus here is not to discuss the alignment configuration at international level as in the form of bi-polarity or multi-polarity but we are discussing the alignment decisions of individual states or governments. A country’s alignment behavior can vary from time to time during its history in response to changing circumstances and policy decisions. Yet one can identify the alignment tendencies such as alliance, neutrality and non-alignment.

**Alliances** are formal agreements to provide mutual military assistance; as such, they carry legal weight and certain benefits as well as risks. Allied countries can pool their military resources, acquire access to foreign bases and stake out territories that enemies are on notice will be denied them by force if necessary. Yet an alliance state also risks interference by allies in its domestic affairs, the possibility being dragged.

**Neutrality** is a stance of formal non partisanship in world affairs. By keeping a low profile, neutrals may avoid some of the problems associated with alliances, particularly the generating of potential enemies and counter alliances. However neutrals must also be aware that if war clouds gather, there may be no one committed to providing a protective military umbrella. Switzerland is one country that has carried neutrality to an extreme case in refusing membership to United Nations till 2002. While the term alignment as used above refers to formal agreement on alliances or neutrality, it can also describe the general affective orientation of a country, i.e., which state or states tend to side with on key issues, countries can tilt towards one side or another in some strategic issues without necessarily becoming part of formal alliance. For example, Israel, which is not a formal ally of U.S, has sided with the United States on many issues.

**Nonalignment** has been the foreign policy pattern of most developing state during cold war. Most developing countries had a movement-Non Alignment Movement (NAM) in which they called for a new foreign policy path/choice/ to be followed disregarding the both the West and East bloc politics and alliances. Although that was practically impossible, NAM had noble agenda that called for the South-south cooperation.

#### Scope

A second foreign policy dimension is the scope of a country’s activities and interests. Some countries have extensive, far-reaching international contacts, while other countries have more limited activities abroad. A country’s scope of contact can affect the outcome of disputes and crises. With regards to the scope of activities a state has in international relations, one can identify at least three patterns of foreign policy behaviors. Some actors act in *Global*terms, others as *Regional* terms, and those that follow policy of *Isolationism.*

Major Powers in international relations have historically been those that have defined their interest in globalterms, interacting regularly with countries in nearly every region of the world. A country such as U.S.A has often defined its national interest in global terms, and it has more or less the wherewithal and the capability to influence world events. Despite it has been declining in economic terms, the country’s military presence and diplomatic communication in every part of the world make her global actor.

Most countries in the world are essentially regional actors, interacting primarily with neighboring states in the same geographical area except for contacts, frequently concerning economic issues such as trade; with major actors like United States and China outside their region. For example, South Africa is a regional actor in Africa in general and in Southern Africa in Particular. It is the most important actor in regional organizations such as SADDIC and AU. India can also be considered as the most important actor in South Asian region, so is China in entire Asia. China’s activities is not limited to Asia only, the country presence is well felt in every region of the world, and China is the best candidate to assume global responsibility and leadership. In recognition to this fact, America is doing everything to contain Chinese economic progress and hence its role in the world. It must be noted that China has hugely engaged itself in extraction activities and related investment in Africa.

Some moments in history, such as key weakness or geographic remoteness, may cause the scope of a country’s foreign policy to become so narrow that isolationism results. This was the case with Burma in 1960 and 70s. Few countries have ever been totally cut off from the outside world, and in an age of interdependence, isolationism becomes an increasingly less viable foreign policy orientation. Some of the known global actors such as United States of America, China, and the ex-USSR all have passed through period of relative isolationism and of mainly regional interests, finally branching out in to global concerns.

#### Mode of Operation/ “Modus Opernadi’

In addition to the alignment and scope dimensions of a country’s foreign policy, we can also identify certain patterns of foreign policy behaviors on the basis of the modus operandi-the method of operation. Some countries often rely on multilateral institutions to address different issues. Still others very much rely on unilateral means. They may choose to solve the problems by themselves. The more multilateralist a state is, the greater its tendency to seek solutions to problems through diplomatic forums in which several states participate, such as the United Nations, rather than utilizing purely bilateral, country to country approaches. Most developing countries used the multilateral approaches to address many issues of concern. The multilateral forum would enhance collective barraging power of these countries vis-a-vis other developed countries. In addition, establishing bilateral relations (establishing Embassies and assigning diplomatic staffs) are often found to be costly. Regardless of the power and capability question, countries may opt to use multilateral frameworks as the best strategy to address issues with the spirit of cooperation and peace. Germany, though it is an economic power, is known to be multi-

lateralist in its external relation. Most of Scandinavian countries fall under this category.

Whereas countries may opt to rely on unilateral means of settling different issues with other countries that have strong economic and military muscles they would prefer this approach to settle problems. They play the carrot and stick diplomacy to affect the outcomes of events. Intervention, threat of use of force and some time, use of force…are some of the tactics that will be employed to influence the behaviors of others. The more unilateral a state is the more likely to initiate actions in international relations or to resist initiatives taken by others (Rochester; p118).

### 2.2.5. Instruments of Foreign Policy

#### Diplomacy

Diplomacy has probably existed for as long as civilization has. The easiest way to understand it is to start by seeing it as a system of structured communication between two or more parties. Records of regular contact via envoys travelling between neighboring civilizations date back at least 2500 years. They lacked many of the characteristics and commonalities of modern diplomacy such as embassies, international law and professional diplomatic services. Yet, it should be underlined that political communities, however they may have been organized, have usually found ways to communicate during peacetime, and have established a wide range of practices for doing so. The benefits are clear when you consider that diplomacy can promote exchanges that enhance trade, culture, wealth and knowledge.

Diplomacy can be defined as a process between actors (diplomats, usually representing a state) who exist within a system (international relations) and engage in private and public dialogue (diplomacy) to pursue their objectives in a peaceful manner. Diplomacy is not foreign policy and must be distinguished from it. It may be helpful to perceive diplomacy as part of foreign policy. When a nation-state makes foreign policy it does so for its own national interests. And, these interests are shaped by a wide range of factors. In basic terms, a state’s foreign policy has two key ingredients; its actions and its strategies for achieving its goals. The interaction one state has with another is considered the act of its foreign policy. This act typically takes place via interactions between government personnel through diplomacy. To interact without diplomacy would typically limit a state’s foreign policy actions to conflict (usually war, but also via economic sanctions) or espionage. In that sense, diplomacy is an essential tool required to operate successfully in today’s international system.

Diplomacy is a complex game of maneuver in which the goal is to influence the behaviors of others in ones interest. In the past diplomacy had been practiced in formalistic and somewhat rigid manner that was limited to the bilateral relations of countries as being represented through the ambassadors hosted in foreign soil. The bargaining process and other diplomatic process, such as exchange of ideas were the business of ambassadors, undertaken under closed and secret manner. Nowadays the nature of diplomacy, its strategy of doing diplomacy has been radically different from the old practices. After WWI and formation of the League of Nations, the old style of diplomacy has been drastically reformed. There arose multilateral diplomacy, public diplomacy, leader-to-leader (summitry diplomacy) in sharp contrast to secret diplomacy and bilateral diplomacy.

Regardless of whether diplomacy is conducted openly or secretly, multilaterally or bilaterally, tacitly or formally, by ambassadors or leader-to-leader, the essence of diplomacy remains bargaining. Bargaining can be defined as a means of settling differences over priorities between contestants through an exchange of proposals for mutually acceptable solutions. There must be conflict over priority in order for bargaining to take place, for if there is total agreement there would be nothing to bargain. Diplomatic bargaining is used primarily to reach agreements, compromises, and settlements where governments objectives conflict. It involves, whether in private meeting or publicized conferences, the attempt to change the policies, actions, attitudes and objectives of other government and their diplomats by persuasion, offering rewards, exchange concessions, or making threats. Thus, like any foreign policy instruments, diplomatic bargaining also espouses an element of power or influence.

In the modern context then, a system dominated by states, we can reasonably regard diplomacy as something that is being conducted for the most part between states. In fact, the applicable international law that governs diplomacy – the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) – only references states as diplomatic actors. Yet, the modern international system also involves powerful actors that are not states. These tend to be international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and international governmental organizations (IGOs). These actors regularly partake in areas of diplomacy and often materially shape outcomes. For example, the United Nations and the European Union (two IGOs) materially shaped diplomacy in the case studies highlighted later in this chapter. And, a range of INGOs – such as Greenpeace – have meaningfully advanced progress toward treaties and agreements in important areas tied to the health and progress of humankind such as international environmental negotiations.

To enable the student to get a sense of what diplomacy is and why it is important to see an example that involves the quest to manage the spread of nuclear weapons. The second half of the twentieth century came to be dominated by conflict between two nuclear-armed superpowers, the United States of America (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) – often called the Soviet Union. In this tense climate, diplomacy ensured that few other nation-states developed nuclear weapons. Hence, the diplomatic success in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is a major one, and one that involved non-state as well as nation-state actors.

**Rules of Effective Diplomacy**

The following are some of the basic rules that diplomats have employed with greater effectiveness over the years:

* **Be realistic:** It is important to have goals that much your ability to achieve them
* **Be careful about what you say:** The experienced diplomats plans out and weighs words carefully.
* **Seek common ground:** Dispute begins negotiations; finds common ground ends them successfully. Almost any negotiation will involve some concession, so it is important to maintain a degree of flexibility.
* **Understand the other side:** There are several aspects to understanding the other side. One is to appreciate an opponent’s perspective even if you do not agree with it.
* **Be patient:** it is also important to bide your time. Being overly anxious can lead to concessions that are unwise and may convey weakness to an opponent.
* **Leave avenues of retreat open:** it is axiomatic that even a rat will fight if trapped in a corner. The same is often true for countries. Call it honor, saving face, or prestige; it is important to leave yourself and your opponent an “out”.

In general, states make considerable use of what are known to be “carrot and stick” approaches when they rely on such diplomatic tactics such as threats, punishment, promise, and rewards. Threats and punishment represent the stick approach, the former involving some hypothetical action and the latter area action. The other two tactics (promise and reward) represent the carrot approach. These also involve hypothetical and real action. Promise is a hypothetical action which aims at influencing the behaviors of state B based on the future hope of giving something. But reward is a promise in action. It is when state “A” gives reward to state “B” in advance or based on the promise done in the past.

#### Economic Instruments of Foreign Policy

Just as modern states are politically and technologically interdependent, so do they rely up on each other for resources and commodities that enable them to develop and sustain viable economies. There hardly exists a state that is self sufficient. There is a considerable degree of dependence up on trade among states. But the degree of dependence and interdependence varies across states. Some states are strong and capable as compared to other states. As Holisti argued “needs that cannot be filled within national frontiers help create dependencies on other states (243). Cognizance of such dependency situation, states often uses their economic muscle to influence the behavior (action, perception and role) of others. Economic instruments can be used to achieve the foreign policy of objective of a state. States may reward or punish states through the manipulation of economic policies. Some of these economic instruments are: tariffs, quotas, boycotts, embargos, and aid. This section provides a brief discussion on how each of these economic instruments are utilized.

Holisti (245) states that economic, particularly trade instruments of foreign policy are normally used for three purposes, namely: (1) to achieve any foreign policy objective by exploiting need and dependence and offering economic rewards, or threat, ending or imposing economic punishments; (2) to increase a state’s capability or deprive a potential enemy’s capabilities ;and (3) to create economic satellites (guaranteed markets and resources of supply) or help maintain political obedience in satellites by creating a relationship of economic dependence. To serve the above objectives, states often employ different techniques of economic reward and punishment.

When rewards are offered or economic punishment are threatened, at least two conditions must be fulfilled to make the exercise of influence effective: (1) the target of the influence or act must perceive that there is a genuine need for the reward or for the avoidance of the punishment, and; (2) no alternative market or source of supply must be easily available to the target. The specific techniques that can be used to reward or punish constitute various control over the flow of goods between countries including, tariffs, quotas, boycotts, and embargos. Loans, credits, and currency manipulation can be used for reward as well.

**Tariff:** Almost all foreign made products coming into a country are taxed for the purpose of raising revenue, protecting domestic producers from foreign competition, or other domestic economic reasons. The tariff structure can be used effectively as an inducement or punishment when a country stands to gain or lose important markets for its products by its upward and down ward manipulation.

**Quota:**To control imports of some commodities, governments may establish quotas rather than tariffs (tariffs may of course be applied to the items enter under quota). Under such arrangement, the supplier usually sends his goods into the country at a favorable price, but is allowed to sell only a certain amount in a given time period.

**Boycott:**A trade boycott organized by a government eliminates the import of either a specific commodity or the total range of export products sold by the country against which the boycott is organized. Governments that don’t engage in state trading normally enforce boycotts by requiring private importers to secure licenses to purchase any commodities from the boycotted country. If the importer doesn’t comply with these requirements, any goods purchased abroad can be confiscated.

**Embargo:** A government that seeks to deprive another country of goods prohibits its own business men from concluding its transactions with commercial organization in the country against which the embargo is organized. An embargo may be enforced either on specific category of goods, such as strategic materials, or on the total range of goods that private businessmen normally send to the country being punished.

**Loans, Credits and Currency Manipulations:** Rewards may include favorable tariff rates and quotas, granting loans (favorable reward offered by the major powers to developing countries) or extending credits. The manipulation of currency rates is also used to create more or less favorable terms of trade between countries. The choice of a technique or combinations of techniques to be used will be influenced by the goals being pursued, the type of economic sensitivity (it must have reason to be concerned about the potential damage that might be caused by A`s action) and vulnerability (i.e., it must be unable to make policy adjustment to overcome the damage without suffering prohibitive costs in the process); and the estimated effectiveness of alternative techniques.

**Foreign Aid:**The transfer of money, goods, or technical advice from donor to recipient-is an instrument of policy that has been in international relation. There are main type of aid program including, military aid, technical assistance, grants and commodity import program, and development loans.

**Military Aid:** probably the oldest type of aid which had been used for buttressing alliances. In the last century, both France and United States had spent millions of Francs and pounds to strengthen their continental friend ship/ alliance. In this aid scheme, the donors supply money and material, while the recipient provided most of the man power. Since World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union have spent more resources on military aid than on their foreign aid programs-and the objective has been the traditional one of safeguarding their own security by strengthening the military capabilities of allies. By helping recipients build up modern forces, the donors hope to obtain some immediate political or security objective. For example, since the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf area in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the United States has donated or sold hundreds of Billions of dollars worth of military equipment to Saudi Arabia and Iran, in the hopes that these countries could maintain the status quo in the region and prevent any radical Arab governments from gaining control over oil transportation routes. In short, military aid is used to create local power balances or preponderances, thus reducing the likelihood that the donor will have to station troops abroad or intervene militarily to protect its interests.

Foreign aid is often used for achieving political and economic objectives of the donors. Most aid programs are obviously not undertaken solely for humanitarian purpose, for a vast portion of the aid goes to a few countries-and sometimes not the countries with the most pressing needs. India, Pakistan, Israel and Egypt, for instance, are large recipients because of their strategic and symbolic importance in world politics. On the other hand, not all aid policies and commitments have an immediate or exclusive political and security objective. Many aid programs are formulated by trained economists, on the basis of economic criteria. Others are designed to achieve immediate suffering or forestall some economic catastrophe. Yet, aside from relieving emergencies economic developments is seldom considered by the donors as an end in itself. Even in the long run, it is designed to help secure certain of the donors` political objectives, which it cannot achieve solely through diplomacy, propaganda, or military policies.

Aid is thus tied with some package designed to change the domestic or foreign policies of the recipient countries. Donors can easily manipulate economic and military aid program to change the internal and external policies of a government. A government can rewarded through increased aid allotments if it promises, for example, political and economic reforms (like adopting liberal democracy and deregulations of public enterprises); or it can be threatened with the reduction in aid if the reforms are not carried out.

## 2.3. Overview of Foreign Policy of Ethiopia

### 2.3.1. Foreign Policy during Tewodros II (1855-1868)

Although the Ethiopian state traces its history back to more than 3000 years, the modern imperial state did not begin to emerge until the middle of 19th century. At the time when Ras Kassa emerged as one of the eminent kings defeating all minor kings fighting for the control of the throne, during the chaotic Era of Princes, the King was predominantly concerned with establishing control over the fragmented parts of the Empire. He wanted to create a united Ethiopia, but only partially succeeded. Yet he introduced the idea of modernity and modern army at the time. Throughout his reign Tewodros tried to develop a dynamic foreign policy that reached out beyond the Horn Region. He sought the Western Christian world to recognize his country and help him to modernize his country. Moreover, as Keller has put it “he appealed specifically to Britain, France and Russia as Christian nations to assist him in whatever ways possible in his fight against the Turks, Egyptians and Islam”.

The emperor attempted to establish his diplomatic relations to fight his immediate enemies claiming Christianity as instrument of foreign policy. However, the emperor’s passionate demand for modern technology and skilled man power from Britain was not concluded to his satisfaction as the latter sent religious missionaries. Despite his demand to be recognized as the emperor of Ethiopia and treated with respect and equal footing with the British Queen that was not reciprocated by Queen Victoria. Consequently Tewodros took desperate measures by taking hostage of several British missionaries including the consul which was responded with the British Millitary Expedition (Keller). Tewodros’s Troops were easily defeated and the King did not surrender but tragically committed suicide.

### 2.3.2. Foreign Policy during Yohannes IV (1872-1889)

Yohannes IV succeeded Tewodros II. Like his predecessor, Yohannes considered Islam as a threat to the territorial integrity of the polity. Indeed Egypt tried to put a serious security threat in its continued attempt to invade the country under many pretexts, yet its motive was to control the source of Blue Nile. These, however, were not successful as Egypt faced subsequent defeat both in 1875 and 1876 at the Battle of Gundet and Gura respectively (Keller). In addition to Muslim threat, the emperor saw European expansionism as greater threat to the survival of the country. In fact his calculation of threat has turned out to be real as Italy got a foot hold at the port of Massawa in 1885.This colonial ambition of Italy was reflected by the Foreign Minister speech “The Red Sea is the key to the Mediterranean” implicating the strategic importance of Ethiopia (Novati). However, the emperor died fighting with the “Mahadists”. The Sudanese resistance groups against British rule happened to invade Western Ethiopia because of their presumption that Yohannes IV was collaborating with the British.

### 2.3.3. Foreign Policy during Menelik II (1889-93)

Following the death of Yohannes, Menlik II of Showa has assumed to the throne. Menelik was the King of Shoa region before his coronation as the Kings of Kings of Ethiopia. He had expanded his sphere of influence towards the far South and East incorporating new areas and communities peacefully or otherwise. According to many Ethiopian historians, the southward expansionism policy of the King was mainly targeted to have access to Sea Port, Zeila. Minelik was aware of the strategic importance of outlet to the sea for the country as he felt that the country’s access to the sea in the North had fallen under Italy’s influence since the mid 1890s. Before the death of Yohannes Italy had good diplomatic relation with Menelik with the objective of weakening its immediate enemy in the North, Yohannes. Menilik comfortably exploited the opportunity to consolidate his power, perhaps to deter Yohannes and bolster its expansionist policy to the south. Menelik’s relation with Italy had disappointed Yohannes as witnessed by the absence of Menelik from participation in the war against Mahadists.

Following the death of Yohannes, however, Italy continued to be the main challenge in the North. Moreover the King saw the other colonial powers surrounding all four corners of the country as the scramble of Africa was heightened. Italy expanded towards the hinterland of Ethiopia from its first hold of Bogess, later named Eritrea, and Missawa port crossing Tekeze river. Menelik was cautiously following such colonial expansionism of Italy. The emperor followed double track diplomacy to contain or reverse Italy’s expansion and maintain the territorial integrity of his country. On the one hand, he entered many treaties and agreements to solve the challenge amicably. One of the remarkable treaties was the ‘*Wuchalle*’ friendship and peace treaty where the parties agreed to avoid war and solve the problem peacefully. On the other hand the emperor was preparing himself by accumulating military ammunitions to defend the aggression from any side of colonial powers, British, French and of course Italy.

However, the emperor’s diplomatic endeavor with Italy failed to result in peace due to Italy’s misinterpretation of the controversial article 17 of the *‘Wuchalle’* treaty. The treaty did contain different meanings and interpretations in the respective languages of the parties. According to the Italian version, Ethiopia failed under the protectorate of the former which then led to the abrogation of the ‘*Wuchale*’ treaty by Ethiopia in 1893. As a result, Italy prepared for war and started its systematic penetration of the country from the north. Menelik was prepared to reverse this aggression raising his traditional Army till only 1896.

In 1896, the emperor declared nation-wide war against Italy in defense of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the century old nation. After a severe battle, Menelik and his people managed to defeat the colonial power. This happened at the bloody Battle of Adwa where Ethiopian forces made a record of history by defeating a powerful European colonial power. The significance of the Adowa victory is loud and clear as many European powers recognized Ethiopia as an independent African state on similar footing with the Europeans. Indeed Britain, France, Russia and the vanquished Italy came to Menelik’s Palace to arrange formal exchange of Ambassadors. Moreover, these powers signed formal boundary treaties with the emperor. In fact the present boundary of Ethiopia vis -a-vis its neighbors had been defined at least on paper. With the exception of Sudan and of course present day Eritrea (being ex-colony of Italy) the boundary of the country with French Somaliland-Djibouti, Kenya (former British colony), and present Somali (Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland) had been defined on paper, yet were not demarcated.

As the boundary issue was not settled, there have been disputes and counter claims with the neighboring countries especially with Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. Of course Somalia claims huge portion of the territory inside Ethiopia. What so ever the case may be, Ethiopia’s foreign policy of the forth coming rulers has significantly been informed by the notion of territorial integrity of the country. And the issue of outlet to the sea remained the burning question determining its policy and role in the region.

### 2.3.4. Foreign Policy during Emperor Haile Selassie I (1916-1974)

Menelik died in 1913 and it was not until 1930 that the next strong emperor Haile Selassie I, assumed the throne. He was dedicated to the creation of a stronger, centralized and bureaucratic empire with unquestioned respect by the international community. This was clear as early as 1923, when as Regent to the Crown, Teferi Mekonen, facilitated Ethiopia’s entry to the League of Nations. Ethiopia’s membership in the League of Nations was clearly instigated by the ever present danger of invasion by Italians. When the Italian Fascists finally invade Ethiopia between 1936 and 1941, the Emperor fled to London and established a government in exile.

From there he journeyed to Geneva, Switzerland, to make a plea before the League of Nations for aid in defense to the country. Although the League of Nations’ charter stipulated that all members were committed to protect the sovereignty of member states, through what was known as the collective security system, the League ultimately failed to take any substantive measure against Italy and the plea of the King was ignored. Apparently viewing the League of Nations’ in action, the King continued to believe in the ultimate value of effective diplomacy. He also recognized Ethiopia’s need for a powerful external patron until he could restore the independence of his country. His diplomatic skills and Britain’s own strategic necessities in the area enabled him to elicit the aid of the British in securing the liberation of Ethiopia.

In the immediate post-war period, Ethiopia was extremely dependent on British military, economic and technical aid. At the same time, the Emperor feared that Britain might either declare Ethiopia a protectorate or use the claim that the whole of Italian East Africa; Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, as an occupied enemy territory and thus could be partitioned for the administrative convenience. Haile Sellasie’s fear moved him to seek alternative relationships that would allow him to loosen Ethiopia’s tie with Britain. This was a period when all the Allied powers were jockeying for leverage in the reordered international political system. France wanted to return to the pre war status quo; Russia wanted to block Britain from claiming too much of the African spoils; the British wanted to solidify its presence in the Horn; and the United States wanted to establish a new presence in the region. As an emerging power, U.S was willing to heed emperors plead to strengthen diplomatic relations.

Through diplomacy, Haile Selassie was able to regain complete administrative control over the territory he claimed and more by 1954. In 1952 a U.N. resolution had made possible a federation between Ethiopia and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Eritrea was to have regional autonomy within the federation, but Haile Selassie was not content with only administrative control. He was not satisfied until he secured the endorsement of both the Eritrean and Ethiopian Assemblies in 1962, which allowed him to incorporate Eritrea fully in to the Empire, making it a province of Ethiopia instead of a trustee-ship.

These maneuvers took place against the backdrop of the emperor’s loosening ties with Britain and establishing new patronage links with United States. British Military Aid was withdrawn in 1952, and the King moved quickly to firm up relations with the United States. Since the early 1940s, the United States had coveted a base in Eritrea where it could set up a radio tracking station. Haile Selasie viewed the use of such an installation by the United States as having more benefits than costs; that is, he would reap the benefit of being closely allied with the most powerful military power in the world, while being paid rent in the form of military aid that could be used to strengthen the state’s military capacity. Two agreements were concluded in 1953 to formulize this new relationship. As a result, the United States guaranteed Ethiopia’s security, which added greatly to the confidence with which the emperor could approach the task of political consolidation.

In addition to the military aid Ethiopia received from the United States over the next 23 years, its armed forces also benefited from the presence of a Military Assistance Advisory Group, which was established in 1954. This group provided training for the Ethiopian forces. By 1975, the total U.S. military assistance to Ethiopia amounted to almost $ 280 million. In addition, between 1953 and 1976, 3978 Ethiopian soldiers were trained in the United States. The military aid was decisive for the Emperor to ensure his survival at home and maintain the territorial integrity of the country. He effectively used military action against those riots and rebellions both in rural and urban places. Even though preferred not to become involved in the domestic politics, on occasions it provided the emperor with the means to put down internal upheavals and riots. On more consistent basis, the United States contributed to the expansion of Ethiopian military as a hedge a against the Somalia threats. It also provided counterinsurgency training and on the ground advisors to help to suppress Eritrean Nationalism.

Ethiopia also played significant role in Africa in fighting for African independence and to end colonialism and apartheid. In the United Nations, Ethiopia played its part in raising agendas and pressing for resolutions against colonialism in collaboration with some countries that supported the cause. India was strong partner in that regard. In this manner, the emperor can be considered as one of the founding fathers of African Unification. The establishment of the organization of African Unity in the capital of Ethiopia witnessed the prominent role of the emperor in African affairs as well. There was a time when the emperor resolved the perennial conflict in Sudan through His Good Offices. Ethiopia also played a significant role in maintaining international peace and security by commit ting its troops for peacekeeping operations in Korea in 1951 and the Congo in 1961.

Of course the emperor’s strategic alliance with outside powers helped him to stay on power for decades. In this regard British military aid and assistance helped him to restore and consolidate his power again by eliminating his potential rivals at home. Directly or indirectly he distanced potential rivals first with help from the British and later on with the help of USA military and technical assistance. There had been so many peasant revolts which the emperor had to deal with his modern military forces trained and assisted by US aid. Over all he managed to consolidate his power at home and stayed on power over four decades. The emperor secured the territorial integrity of the country and also secured port through Eritrea, yet the abrogation of the UN imposed federation arrangement of Eritrea remained one of a foreign policy challenge to the military regime who came to power through coup de’tat. So was the question of Ogaden.

### 2.3.5. Foreign Policy during the Military Government (1974—1991)

The military regime that took control of state power in 1974 adopted a foreign policy largely oriented to socialist ideology. The primary objectives of the foreign policy were survival of the regime and maintaining the territorial integrity of the country. Apart from these, restructuring the society along socialist lines was also considered as the foundation for the foreign policy motives at home. The major strategy to achieve the stated objectives heavily focused on building the military capability of the country. And force had been employed as the best strategy to silence dissent at home and deter the perceived external enemies of the country.

Since socialism was the guiding philosophy of the country, friendship and alliance with socialist countries of the world was considered as a viable strategy for realizing socialism at home and perhaps in the world. However, since the regime did not have the necessary economic and military capabilities to achieve its objectives, the country was very much dependent on economic and military aid on the others. In this regard, the country was heavily dependent on military aid on the Soviet Union which prevented it from securing any kind of military and technical assistance from the US and other European countries. The regime was condemned by the west for its human rights record, especially its treatment of former government officials. This resulted in declining Ethio-US relations marking its lowest point with the closure of the US military base and operation of military assistance within 72 hours (Keller). Following such problems, internal and external enemies began to take action to hasten the demise of the regime.

Internally Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) launched military attack on the Ethiopian Army. Many external actors were involved in sponsoring the rebel group, including; Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and later USA itself. Moreover, Somalia’s invasion of the Ethiopian region of Ogaden was one of the serious external challenges of the Ethiopian Government at the time. The government did not have enough capacity to calm the Eritrean Rebels and the Somali irredentist invasion. However, the regime managed to reverse the Somali aggression with the help of the new powerful patron, USSR. The involvement of USSR in the region only heightened the superpower rivalry between the USA and USSR during the cold war era (Schwab).

The corner stone of Ethiopia’s foreign policy at the time was maintaining continuing friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Apart from the Dergue’s near total dependence on the leaders in Moscow and their Warsaw Pact allies for military and logistical support during the war with Somalia and in the Eritrean conflict, several others factors have facilitated the consolidation of this new special relationship. These include: the immediate and unhesitant recognition of Mengistu’s government by the Soviet Union; the quick and generous support they offered when the military regime needed assistance and guidance to address problems inherited from the past and related to the new socio-economic and political order.

Indicative of the magnitude of its foreign relations, the Dergue has signed numerous economic, social, political, trade, cultural, educational, consular, and administrative agreements and protocols with almost all socialist countries. The Soviet Union and its allies were thus able to exert immense influence in both domestic and foreign affairs of Ethiopia. Experts from the German Democratic Republic assisted the military regime in its struggle against domestic guerilla movements and external opponents, and in training cadres for the completely reorganized security services, later consolidated in to a full-fledged ministry with the biggest budget in the country. The Dergue had sent hundreds of Ethiopians for training to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba while employing many of their administrators and technicians.

Apart from socialism, Ethiopia’s strategic locations and other questions, such as; Eritrea, Somalia, and the issue of the Nile, had also shaped the foreign policy orientation and behavior of military government. Ethiopia being located in the Horn of Africa is at the cross roads to the oil rich middle East region and Indian Ocean. As a result of this the U.S.S.R was keen to have stronghold over the area, replacing the United States. U.S.S.R came at the right time when the Dergue called for military aid to reverse the aggression from Somalia in the East and quell the Eritrean nationalists in the north part of the country. It should be noted that U.S.S.R was used to be a friend of Somalia, yet all of a sudden, it made a swift change of policy when it came to Ethiopian side; while the U.S.A piped in to Somalia. That was a time of cold war whereby the two super powers, U.S.S.R and U.S.A were pitting each other to have a sphere of influence in the region.

Ethiopia shares the Nile and its longest border with Sudan, yet the relation between the two had been strained for decades. Sudan was one of the host countries for Ethiopian opposition forces. In turn Ethiopia had been supporting the dissent groups in southern Sudan, including the Sudan’s People’s Liberation Army/SPLA (Amare Tekle). Amare argues that Ethiopia’s foreign policy towards Sudan was based in part on the mistrust of the Arab Northerners as well. Similarly Amare contends that, “Ethiopia’s relation with any third state in the Nile Valley have been shaped as much by Egypt’s attitude and action as regards to Somalia, Eritrea and the Sudan and by its close association with Arab and Muslim States”.

With regard to Africa’s broader issues of decolonization and anti-Apartheid struggle, Ethiopia played significant role. The regime had extended its military and technical support to Freedom fighters in Angola and Rhodesia. The regime had also showed its solidarity to Palestine’s cause by condemning Israel and sought political allegiance with the Arab world, however the negative perception that most Arab countries have towards Ethiopia remained unchanged. Finally, the regime collapsed following the end of cold war unable to survive in the absence of military aid from the socialist blocs, USSR, Cuba.

In general the adoption of socialism and its subsequent impact on the foreign policy of the country could be considered as a departure from its predecessors; however the policy objective of the country remained unchanged. The country’s policy towards its neighbors, the region, and the Arab world remained unchanged. Such continuity of in the era of dynamic world teaches us the determining role of geography in the making and implementation of foreign policy of Ethiopia. The issue of Nile River, boundary issues, the strategic location of the country, unique culture (Christianity) amid the Islam religion and Arab culture had cumulative effect in shaping the foreign policy the country

### 2.3.6. The Foreign Policy of Ethiopia in the Post 1991

With EPRDF’s ascent to power the country adopted a new foreign policy orientation and objectives. In the post 1991 period, Ethiopia’s foreign policy is driven primarily by the quest to ensure national interest and security. As such, one of the goals of the foreign policy is to ensure the survival of the multi- national state. National interest of the country is understood in terms of realizing the real interest of the people mainly democracy and development. It refers to the primary interest of the people to live freely from poverty, disease and ignorance. In this regard, foreign policy has been considered as an instrument to solve the domestic problems of the country, including; lack of good governance, instability and lack of economic development. If the equality and democratic rights of nations, nationalities, peoples and individuals are not realized, then conflicts can happen leading to instability and eventual disintegration. These are also considered as factors that damage national image and pride. These domestic problems were identified as the main challenges to ensuring the survival and national interest of the people. The foreign policy of Ethiopia has been designed to create favorable external environment to achieve rapid economic development and build up democratic system. So democracy and development are the foreign policy visions of the country.

The primary strategy in realization of these goals is to put the focus on domestic issues first. Addressing domestic political and economic problems requires forging national consensus about the problems and exit strategies from the problem. Especially in the age of globalization emphasizing on external issues such as; seeking financial aid, loans or technical issues would subject the country to dependency and vulnerability. That will limit not only the diplomatic leverage of the country but also will neglect the crux of the matter at home, viz., the issue of democratization and good governance and issues of development would not be addressed. This strategy is called an “inside-out” approach. If we solve our domestic problems the country would not be vulnerable and its peace and survival can be ensured. Even its outside enemies can be effectively deterred only after the country builds up strong economic capability and build up a democratic system which would in turn minimize the risk of disintegration at home as well. The inside out approach would then help to reduce the countries vulnerability to threat. It is often true that countries may tempt to pose a threat thinking that Ethiopia could easily succumb to them due to its internal problems. Our internal problems then would invite the outside enemies to come in and exploit that opportunities

At diplomatic level, economic diplomacy is adopted to strengthen the domestic efforts in fighting poverty and backwardness and address the issues of development. Economic diplomacy involves attracting foreign investments, seeking markets for Ethiopian exportable commodities, seeking aid and confessional loans too. Economic diplomacy has also been considered as viable strategy under the age of globalization. It helps to exploit the opportunities that globalization offers, such as free trade, investment and technological transfers. Ethiopia would be beneficiary out of the free trade regimes and practices if sound economic policy is put in place at home. Economic diplomacy can help the country to cope up with the challenges of globalization, but only if we create self reliant and sustainable development. Aid and technical assistance can help us building up our capacity at home temporarily, though these are not long lasting. The Security and Foreign Policy of the country also indicated that Ethiopia would adopt a kind of East-look policy. Ethiopia appreciates the East Asian countries economic successes and development paths. The country would like to learn from such successful countries such as Singapore, Malaysian and Indonesia.

The other foreign policy strategy is building up the military capability of the country. Peaceful dialogues and negotiations will be employed to peacefully coexist with others. Diplomatic solutions can always be taken prior attention when dealing even disputes. But above all building up military capability would have a deterrence effect. Countries may no venture to pose a threat on the country if the military capability of the country is scale up and modernized.

Looking at the patterns of the country’s foreign policies over the years, there have been changes and continuities in the foreign policy goals and tactics adopted by different governments of Ethiopia. Though strategies may sometimes differ the primary foreign policy objective of all the three regimes remained the maintenance of the territorial integrity and independence of the country. To this end the three regimes used a combination of both military force and diplomacy to address both internal and external challenges depending on the circumstances. In this manner, while the imperial and the military regime’s foreign policy strategy is largely an approach the current regime followed “in-side out” approach.